



SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN

DELTA CONSERVANCY

Delta Conservancy Strategic Plan

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2011–2012 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Board

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Liaison Advisors

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U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Jessica Davenport
Bay Conservation and Development Commission

Robin Kulakow
Yolo Basin Foundation

Paul Robershotte
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Mark Wilson
Delta Protection Commission

Steve Chappell
Suisun Resource Conservation District

Jeff Melby
California Coastal Conservancy

Ren Lohefener
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mike Villines Central Valley Flood Protection
Board

Maria Rea
U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service

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Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

John Laird
Secretary for Natural Resources Agency

Campbell Ingram
Executive Officer
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

This Strategic Plan was prepared for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Board under the direction of:

Nancy UllreyActing Assistant Executive Officer

In collaboration with:

Rhonda Hoover-Flores Executive Assistant

Elisa Sabatini.....Resources and Regulatory Specialist

Susan Roberts Board Liaison

Kristal Fadtk..... Staff Environmental Scientist

The Conservancy contracted with an external team lead by Kearns & West, Inc. to assist with preparation of this plan. The team members are:

J. Michael Harty, Project Director..... Kearns & West, Inc.

Briana Moseley, Project Manager Kearns & West, Inc.

Barbara J. McDonnell, Technical Team LeadMWH

Bill Eisenstein Eisenstein Consulting, LLC

Susan Ellsworth.....

Michelle OrrESA PWA

Eric Ginney.....ESA PWA

Steve Deverel HydroFocus, Inc.

Jamil IbrahimMWH

Mike Conrad Sapper West

Dan Sumner UC Davis

Frank H. Buck..... UC Davis

Louise Jackson..... UC Davis

Greg Sutter Westervelt Ecological Services

Robert Capriola Westervelt Ecological Services

Executive Summary

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (the “Delta Conservancy” or “Conservancy”) is California’s newest conservancy, created by the Legislature as part of comprehensive Delta-focused legislation in November 2009.

California’s conservancies are homegrown institutions created to carry out a dedicated mission of enhancement for major regional landscapes. They are able to act flexibly, in coordination with private businesses and not-for-profit organizations, while advancing the public good as a governmental entity.

The Delta Conservancy’s service area is the statutory Delta and Suisun Marsh, which encompasses parts of six counties and approximately 1,300 square miles, including some 1,000 miles of levees and waterways.

This area includes an irreplaceable ecosystem and a robust economy and culture that revolve around agriculture.

Ecosystem

The Delta ecosystem is home to more than 55 species of fish and 750 species of plants, and provides irreplaceable habitat for numerous species of migratory birds. Despite its richness the Delta ecosystem has been described as one of the most fragile in the United States. It is beset by serious problems: rapid declines in fish populations, large numbers of aggressive invasive species, poor water quality, extensive fresh water diversions, disconnection of floodplains and wetlands from necessary water flows, and cumulative loss of habitat for nearly all life stages of fish, bird,

The Delta and Suisun Marsh

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is at the confluence of the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River basins. This confluence is unique because the two river deltas merge into an inland delta. The Delta is the largest estuary on the west coast of North and South Americas, and is a unique natural resource of local, state, and national significance.

The Suisun Marsh is the largest contiguous brackish water marsh remaining on the west coast of North America and is a critical part of the San Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta estuary ecosystem. The Marsh encompasses more than 10 percent of California’s remaining natural wetlands.

The Delta is a significant agricultural resource. The Delta and Suisun Marsh, part of the Pacific Flyway, also offer numerous opportunities for recreation, such as boating, fishing, hiking, birding, and hunting.

1 and wildlife species. Restoration of this ecosystem will require not only physical habitat
2 reconstruction across the several habitat types mentioned above but also active and
3 sophisticated management of water flows and other ecosystem processes.

4 *Economy*

5 Approximately 500,000 acres of highly productive agricultural lands provide the economic
6 base and primary land use in the Delta. Agriculture encompasses livestock, specialty crops
7 such as asparagus, pears, and wine grapes, and various table vegetables and feed crops.
8 Agriculture is by far the largest portion of a \$3 billion Delta regional economy that also
9 includes recreation and tourism. The Delta is also traversed by energy, communications and
10 transportation facilities vital to the economic health of the state.

11 *People and Culture*

12 There is a rich cultural heritage in the Delta. It is home to several historically significant
13 legacy communities, including Bethel Island, Clarksburg, Courtland, Freeport, Hood,
14 Isleton, Knightsen, Locke, Rio Vista, Ryde, and Walnut Grove. Locke, the largest remaining
15 town built by early Chinese immigrants to the United States, is a National Historic
16 Landmark District.

17 *The Delta Conservancy's Legislation*

18 The Legislature created the Conservancy to act as a primary state agency to implement
19 ecosystem restoration in the Delta and support efforts that advance environmental
20 protection and the economic well being of Delta residents. The Legislature directed that the
21 Conservancy work in collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested
22 parties and provided examples of activities to be supported, including:

- 23 • Protecting and enhancing habitat and habitat restoration; assisting local entities in the
24 implementation of their habitat conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community
25 conservation plans (NCCPs); facilitating “take” protection and safe harbor agreements
26 for adjacent landowners and local public agencies; and promoting environmental
27 education through grant funding;¹
- 28 • Protecting and preserving Delta agriculture and working landscapes; increasing the
29 resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes;
30 and protecting and improving water quality; and

¹ This is a partial list only. A comprehensive review of the Delta Conservancy's legislation can be found in Section II of this plan.

- 1 • Providing increased opportunities for tourism and recreation in the Delta; assisting the
2 Delta regional economy; and promoting Delta legacy communities and economic vitality
3 in the Delta.

4 *Mission and Governance*

5 The Conservancy's Mission Statement is:

6 *Working collaboratively and in coordination with local communities, the Conservancy*
7 *will lead efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the Delta's economy, agriculture and*
8 *working landscapes, and environment, for the benefit of the Delta region, its local*
9 *communities, and the citizens of California.*

10

11 The Conservancy is governed by a 23-member Board, including eleven voting members, two
12 non-voting members, and ten liaison advisors. The Board's chair is selected from among the
13 five Delta county representatives, all of whom are voting members.²

14 The Delta Conservancy is both similar to and different from the nine state conservancies
15 established before it. It has authority to own or manage land—but not to exercise eminent
16 domain. It may distribute grants and partner with non-governmental organizations in
17 pursuit of its mission. Nearly all conservancies have the powers to acquire, exchange, and
18 improve land from willing sellers, but the Delta Conservancy is uniquely required to “use
19 conservation easements to accomplish ecosystem restoration whenever feasible.” The Delta
20 Conservancy is also the only state conservancy explicitly empowered to acquire water rights
21 and “take or fund action” outside of the formal boundaries of its region subject to certain
22 conditions.

23 **Strategic Plan Structure**

24 There are three key parts to the Strategic Plan: Priorities and Criteria; Goals, Objectives,
25 and Strategies; and Implementation Scenarios. Each of these is summarized below.

26 *Priorities and Criteria*

27 The Legislature specified that the Conservancy's Strategic Plan establish priorities and
28 criteria for projects and programs. This Strategic Plan includes initial priorities and criteria
29 that are responsive to the Legislature's direction, including the Conservancy's ongoing
30 assessment of requirements, capabilities, and funding needs. They reflect the reality of the

² The other voting members are: two public members appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Senate; one public member appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; one public member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly; the Secretary of Resources or a designee; and the Director of Finance or a designee.

1 Conservancy's current scenario (see Section VII) and allow for future refinement in
2 response to changed circumstances.

3 *Priorities.* In the current situation, where the Conservancy has limited funding and the
4 planning context is uncertain, the Conservancy's priorities are:

- 5 • Potential opportunities to advance the Conservancy's mission that do not require
6 additional Conservancy funding and match existing organizational resources. This
7 would include convening a voluntary Restoration Network to coordinate and
8 integrate early restoration in the Delta, and exploring a collaborative Delta Branding
9 effort
- 10 • Relationships with other local, state, and federal agencies, non-public organizations,
11 and key stakeholders, and education across the Delta about the Conservancy's roles
- 12 • Organizational capacity and future funding sources

13 The Conservancy will use information gathered through its ongoing assessment, including
14 its own Finance Plan, to identify future priorities for programs and funding. These will
15 become relevant as the Conservancy transitions into other scenarios.

16 *Criteria.* The Conservancy will develop funding criteria to support future grant making in a
17 manner consistent with legal and other requirements. Because of the legal and regulatory
18 aspects of grant making the Strategic Plan is not the appropriate vehicle for such an effort.
19 These criteria, once developed, will ensure that the Conservancy is prepared to fulfill the
20 Legislature's intent as funding becomes available to support its co-equal responsibilities.

21 The five criteria described below reflect the Conservancy's mandates and authorities as well
22 as input gathered through interviews and public meetings as part of the process of
23 preparing this Strategic Plan. They are consistent with the Conservancy's assessment
24 process described above. The Conservancy anticipates that these criteria will be refined, and
25 new criteria developed, in the context of specific future Conservancy projects.

26 *Balance.* The Conservancy will develop and implement a balanced program: a fair
27 distribution of costs and benefits between its co-equal responsibilities and the geographic
28 distribution of its projects.

29 *Multiple Benefits.* The Conservancy will actively look for opportunities to meet its
30 co-equal responsibilities by identifying and providing multiple benefits and will encourage
31 its partners and collaborators to do the same.

1 *Ecosystem Restoration and Economic Development Models.* The Conservancy will
2 encourage the use of multiple models to support decision making. In its role as a primary
3 state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta, the Conservancy anticipates
4 using models as it makes choices about participating in, supporting, managing, or leading
5 specific restoration activities or programs developed outside the Conservancy. In carrying
6 out its economic development role the Conservancy anticipates using models as it make
7 choices about participating in, supporting, managing, or leading specific development
8 activities or programs developed outside the Conservancy.

9 *Mitigation of Impacts.* The Conservancy will be sensitive to impacts, both direct and
10 indirect, of its programs.

11 *Climate Change.* The Conservancy's climate change policy, adopted by the Board,
12 will serve as an important touchstone for decision making.

13 *Goals, Objectives, and Strategies*

14 Section VI presents the Goals, Objectives, and Strategies that are the heart of this plan. Six
15 goals describe the Conservancy's range of activities both now and in the foreseeable future.
16 The first four goals address substantive program priorities; the latter two goals address
17 organizational and funding priorities. The order of goals is not intended as a strict sequence
18 of Conservancy priorities. The six goals are:

19 **Goal 1:** Establish the Conservancy as a valuable partner with Delta growers, agriculture-
20 related businesses, and residents in protecting and enhancing the Delta's agricultural and
21 working landscapes and sense of place

22 **Goal 2:** Lead economic enhancement activities that support the Delta ecosystem and
23 economy

24 **Goal 3:** Lead efforts in protecting, enhancing and restoring the Delta ecosystem in
25 coordination with other governmental and non-governmental entities and citizens in the
26 Delta

27 **Goal 4:** Establish the Conservancy as a leader in gathering and communicating scientific
28 and practical information about the Delta ecosystem and economy

29 **Goal 5:** Create an effective organization based on principles of collaboration, coordination,
30 appropriate transparency, and efficient use of resources to fulfill the Conservancy's mission
31 and deliver its programs

1 **Goal 6:** Establish a stable, diversified, and self-sustaining funding base for the
2 Conservancy

3 For each goal the plan identifies multiple objectives: these are more focused, actionable and
4 in some cases measurable components of the goals. One or more strategies are associated
5 with each objective. These are potential actions that the Conservancy may undertake to
6 achieve its objectives and goals. The goals, objectives and strategies are intended to cover
7 the range of responsibilities and authorities that the Legislature articulated for the
8 Conservancy in its enabling legislation. They are presented as a suite of linked choices for
9 the Conservancy that will be shaped primarily by two factors: funding and the status of key
10 plans such as the Delta Plan and the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. The Conservancy will not
11 pursue every goal, objective, or strategy presented in this plan at the same time or with the
12 same level of resources, but will match its choices to circumstances and opportunities.

13 *Implementation Scenarios*

14 The Delta Conservancy must develop and implement its programs for ecosystem
15 restoration and economic well being within a complex context that requires “consistency”
16 with five other plans and laws, including the Delta Plan under development by the Delta
17 Stewardship Council. The Conservancy’s planning context also includes ongoing city and
18 county planning activities; the Delta Protection Commission’s Economic Sustainability Plan
19 for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; and proposals for economic enhancement
20 developed by private and non-governmental organizations such as the Discover the Delta
21 Foundation.

22 The need to establish a stable funding base for the Conservancy’s activities is a major
23 priority of this Strategic Plan. The Delta Conservancy is unique in that it was not
24 established concurrent with bond funding. It is unclear when or whether a long-anticipated
25 bond measure to finance water and ecosystem improvements statewide, including
26 significant potential financing for the Delta Conservancy, will be put before voters. Other
27 funding sources that could prove important to the Conservancy’s near-term future include
28 allocations from existing bond funds, appropriations from the state general fund, carbon
29 offsets that would allow carbon emitters to pay Delta landowners for carbon sequestration
30 activities under AB 32’s implementation mechanisms, dedicated revenue streams from
31 state government such as a license plate fund, foundation programs, or revenue-generating
32 partnerships with major private or non-profit entities.

33 This initial Strategic Plan is intended to support decision-making in four scenarios:

- 34 • Low funding and related plans incomplete or not enforceable—the current scenario

- 1 • Low funding and related plans complete and enforceable
- 2 • High finding and related plans incomplete or not enforceable
- 3 • High funding and related plans complete and enforceable

4

5 **Strategic Plan Development Process**

6 This Strategic Plan has been developed through a process that reflects the Conservancy's
7 commitment to collaboration, consultation, and transparency. In Phase I the Strategic Plan
8 team consulted widely with members of the Conservancy Board and the Conservancy's
9 Strategic Plan and Policy Subcommittee; key Delta stakeholder organizations in agriculture
10 and other sectors; and local government officials and staff including county agriculture
11 commissioners. In Phase II the Strategic Plan team organized and conducted five public
12 input meetings, one in each of the five Delta counties. These public meetings occurred
13 during January-February 2012. In Phase III a preliminary Draft Strategic Plan was
14 prepared with input from the Subcommittee and posted on the Conservancy's web page for
15 public comment from March 26 to April 20. The Strategic Plan team conducted three public
16 work sessions for discussion of the public draft plan in Rio Vista (April 10), Clarksburg
17 (April 12), and Oakley (April 14) that were attended by at least one Conservancy Board
18 member. Conservancy staff also made presentations about the draft public plan at
19 supervisor meetings in all five Delta counties and conducted follow up discussions with key
20 Delta stakeholder organizations.

21 This Strategic Plan is part of Phase IV. It will be presented to the Conservancy's Board for
22 deliberation on May 16, 2012, revised as needed, and considered for adoption on June 27,
23 2012, according to the current schedule.

24 A copy of this Strategic Plan and other related information can be found at the
25 Conservancy's website: <http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov>. A CD or printed copy may be
26 requested by contacting the Conservancy at (916) 375-2084. Hard copies are available at
27 the Conservancy's offices at 3500 Industrial Blvd., West Sacramento.

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1 I. Introduction

2 The regional landscapes of California are famous the world over.
3 Our coast, mountains, foothills and agricultural valleys have been
4 embraced as vibrant, unique parts of America, worthy of investment,
5 protection and celebration.

6 The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (the “Delta”) is now taking its rightful place
7 as one of those unique regions. The confluence of the Sacramento and San
8 Joaquin Rivers and the heart of the Great Central Valley, the Delta is the largest
9 estuary on the west coast of the Americas and an agricultural and cultural

10 landscape of national
11 significance. The
12 Delta is a major
13 stopover on the
14 Pacific Flyway and
15 includes the Suisun
16 Marsh, the largest
17 contiguous brackish
18 water marsh
19 remaining on the
20 west coast of the
21 United States. It also



22 offers unsurpassed opportunities for outdoor recreation such as boating, fishing,
23 hunting, and birding.

24 California has created a homegrown institution—the state conservancy—to carry
25 out a dedicated mission of regional enhancement for its major regional
26 landscapes. Conservancies are able to act flexibly, in coordination with private
27 businesses and not-for-profit organizations, while advancing the public good as a
28 governmental entity. They work at the intersection of markets and governance to
29 protect and enhance the economy, environment, and cultural heritage of
30 California’s regions. There are currently 10 state conservancies, with the
31 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (the “Delta Conservancy” or the
32 “Conservancy”) being the newest.

1 The Delta Conservancy’s Mission, described below in detail, is critically
2 important. The Delta ecosystem retains tremendous assets as home to more than
3 55 species of fish and 750 species of plants, and it provides irreplaceable habitat
4 for numerous species of migratory birds. Nevertheless, certain parts of the Delta
5 ecosystem are in serious decline. The Delta economy is based on almost 500,000
6 acres of highly productive agricultural soils but this economy also faces
7 significant challenges. The Delta Conservancy must address these challenges in
8 collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders; this Strategic Plan will serve as a
9 resource for the Conservancy’s Board and staff in this effort.

10 This Strategic Plan is organized into six additional sections:

11 Section II: a detailed discussion of the Conservancy’s legislation and organization

12 Section III: an overview of the complex planning and funding context that shapes
13 this Strategic Plan

14 Section IV: a description of the process for developing this Strategic Plan

15 Section V: a summary of Priorities and Criteria for the Conservancy

16 Section VI: descriptions of the Conservancy’s Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

17 Section VII: an overview of how the Conservancy will implement this Strategic
18 Plan

1 II. About the Sacramento – San Joaquin 2 Delta and the Conservancy

3 The Conservancy's service area is the statutory Delta (see Water
4 Code §12220) and Suisun Marsh, containing approximately 1,300
5 square miles and more than 1,000 miles of levees and waterways.³
6 This service area covers parts of six counties: Contra Costa,
7 Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo (collectively known as
8 the "Delta counties"), as well as a very small part of Alameda.
9 Within this area are an irreplaceable ecosystem and a robust
10 economy and a local culture that revolve around agriculture.

11 The Delta ecosystem is distinguished by various aquatic ecosystems that host
12 numerous rare native fish, and by several distinct terrestrial and wetland habitats
13 that support abundant bird and animal life. These key habitats include tidal
14 marshes, managed freshwater wetlands, in-channel fresh and brackish water
15 habitats, open water habitats, seasonal wetlands, riparian forest, and grasslands,
16 among others. In all of these habitats there exist both resident and migratory
17 species of great conservation value. This means that Delta ecosystem
18 management must consider not only localized contexts but also the way that
19 Delta habitats fit within regional, watershed, and even continental-scale
20 ecosystems.

21 Despite this richness, the Delta ecosystem has been described as one of the most
22 fragile in the United States. It is beset by serious problems, including rapid
23 declines in native fish populations, large numbers of aggressive invasive species,
24 highly variable water quality, extensive fresh water diversions, disconnection of
25 floodplains and wetlands from necessary water flows, and cumulative loss of
26 habitat for nearly all life stages of native fish, bird, and wildlife species.
27 Restoration of this ecosystem will require not only physical habitat
28 reconstruction across the habitat types mentioned above, but also active and

³ See Figure 1: Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Service Area Map, p. 16. Because the Delta Conservancy's service area includes both the statutory Delta and Suisun Marsh, this plan occasionally combines the two in referring to "the Delta" or "the Delta ecosystem." These references are solely for the sake of convenience.

1 sophisticated management of water flows, water quality constituents, and
2 ecosystem processes.

3 The economic base and primary land use in the Delta is agriculture. Delta lands
4 are highly productive, and the Delta counties and the Delta Protection
5 Commission's *Land Use and Resource Management Plan for the Primary Zone
6 of the Delta* (RMP) have delineated Delta lands for long-term agricultural use.⁴
7 These uses have historically included specialty crops as varied as asparagus,
8 pears, and wine grapes, along with a wide variety of table vegetables, feed crops
9 and livestock. Agriculture is the largest portion of a \$3 billion Delta regional
10 economy that also includes recreation and tourism.⁵ The Delta is also traversed
11 by energy, communications and transportation facilities vital to the economic
12 health of the state.

13 Importantly, some
14 Delta agricultural
15 lands also provide
16 rich seasonal wildlife
17 habitat. Thousands
18 of acres are shallowly
19 flooded after harvest
20 and provide feeding
21 and resting areas for
22 resident and
23 migratory birds and



24 other wildlife. This practice of seasonal flooding is one example of a management
25 practice that supports both the Delta ecosystem and the economy.

26 There is also a rich cultural heritage in the Delta. It is home to several historically
27 significant legacy communities, including Bethel Island, Clarksburg, Courtland,
28 Freeport, Hood, Isleton, Knightsen, Locke, Rio Vista, Ryde, and Walnut Grove.
29 Locke, the largest remaining town built by early Chinese immigrants to the
30 United States, is a National Historic Landmark District. This heritage lives on in

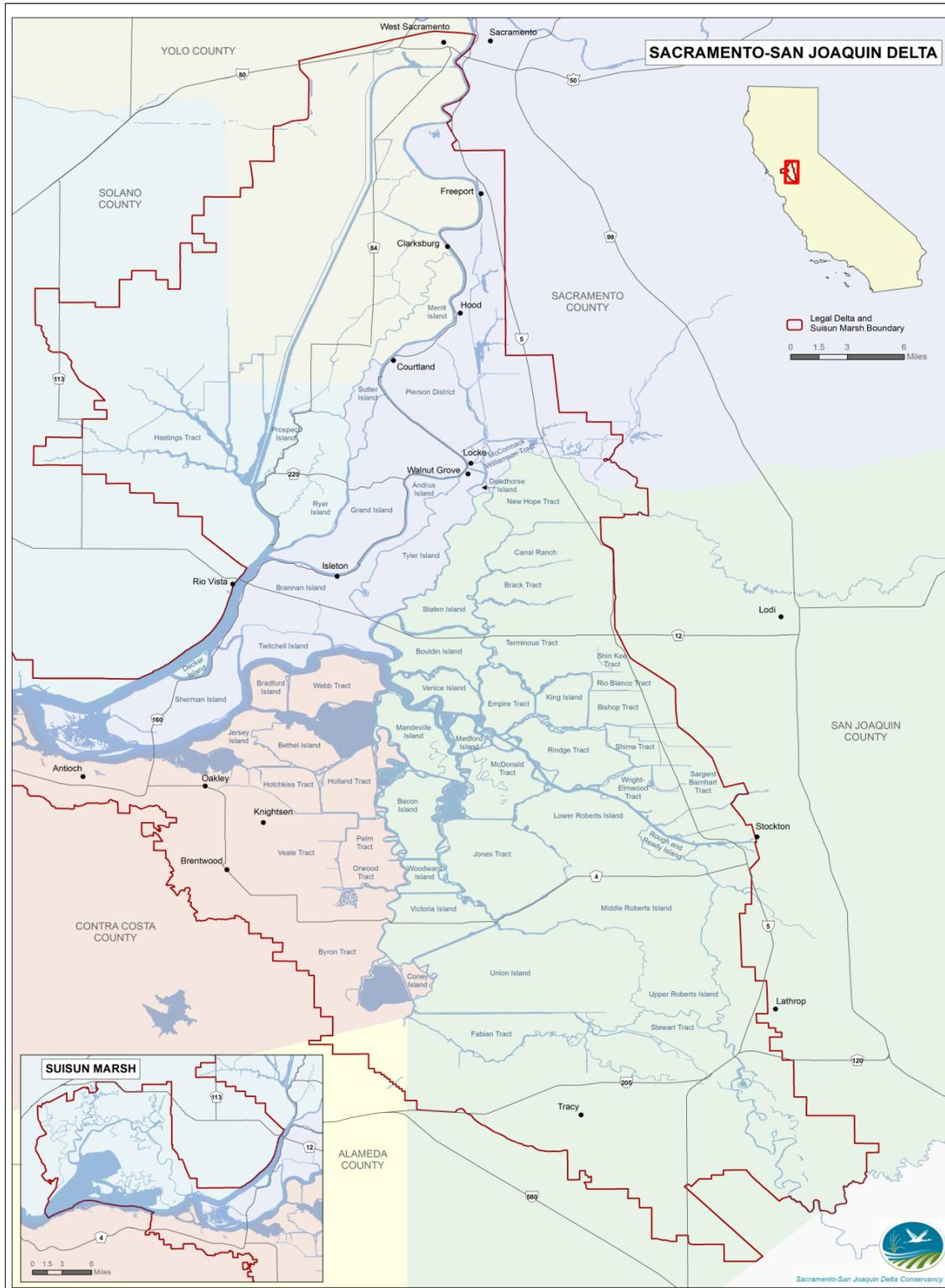
⁴ The Conservancy's strategic plan is required by law to be consistent with the RMP. Public Resources Code §32376.

⁵ Based on information presented in the Delta Protection Commission's Economic Sustainability Plan, pp. 112, 147, 180. The \$3 billion total combines estimates for the five Delta counties and the Delta region. An estimate of statewide economic impact from the Delta would be larger.

- 1 the continued innovation and vitality of Delta farmers, residents, and leaders in
- 2 addressing challenges to the region’s future.

3 **Figure 1: Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy**

4 **Service Area Map**



1 **Legislation and Program**

2
3 The Delta Conservancy was established as part of SBX7 1, enacted in November
4 2009, to carry out two charges beginning in February 2010:⁶

- 5 • Act as a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the
6 Delta (§32320(a))⁷, and
- 7 • Support efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic
8 well being of Delta residents. (§32320(b))⁸

9
10 The Legislature directed that the Conservancy's role of providing support include
11 efforts that:

- 12 1. Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration
- 13 2. Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes
- 14 3. Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation in the Delta
- 15 4. Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta, in
16 coordination with the Delta Protection Commission
- 17 5. Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such
18 as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection
19 Commission
- 20 6. Protect and improve water quality
- 21 7. Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the
22 Conservancy's program
- 23 8. Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed

⁶ SBX7 1 was part of a package of water bills enacted by the Legislature in November 2009. Section 37 of that statute is the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act (the "Delta Conservancy Act"), codified at §32300 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code. The text of the Delta Conservancy Act can be found in Appendix B.

⁷ All references are to the Public Resources Code (PRC) unless otherwise indicated.

⁸ For the Delta Conservancy, supporting efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well being of Delta residents can be thought of as "co-equal" responsibilities. This formulation is not part of the statute creating the Conservancy, and should not be confused with the State's policy of co-equal goals for the Delta: providing a more reliable water supply and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem. Water Code §85054.

- 1 9. Protect, conserve and restore the region’s physical, agricultural, cultural,
2 historical and living resources
- 3 10. Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation
4 plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans (NCCPs)
- 5 11. Facilitate take protection and safe harbor agreements under the federal
6 Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.), the California
7 Endangered Species Act (Chapter 1.5, commencing with §2050, of
8 Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code) and the Natural Community
9 Conservation Planning Act (Chapter 10, commencing with §2800, of
10 Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code) for adjacent landowners and local
11 public agencies, and
- 12 12. Promote environmental education through grant funding

13

14 The Legislature also directed the Conservancy to “undertake efforts to enhance
15 public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public” when supporting such
16 efforts. (§32322(c))

17 **These charges, and the twelve areas of authority identified by the**
18 **Legislature as deserving support, form the foundation of the**
19 **Conservancy’s program.**

20 The Conservancy has a wide range of tools and authorities available to implement
21 its program, including the ability to:

- 22 • Pursue and accept grants and other funding from a variety of sources,
23 including federal, state, and local funds or grants, gifts, donations,
24 bequests, and rents, among others (§32372)
- 25 • Award grants and other funding to local government, partner agencies, or
26 nonprofit organizations to further the goals of the Conservancy
27 (§32364.5)
- 28 • Engage in partnerships with nonprofit organizations, local public
29 agencies, and landowners (§32362)

- 1 • Acquire from willing sellers or transferors interests in real property and
2 improve, lease, or transfer interests in real property (§32366(a))
- 3 • Acquire water or water rights (§32380)
- 4 • Create and manage endowments (§32372(b))
- 5 • Allocate funds to a separate program within the Conservancy for
6 economic sustainability within the Delta (§32360(b)(3))
- 7 • Develop projects and programs designed to further the purposes of the
8 Conservancy (§32378(a))
- 9 • Provide technical information, expertise, program and project
10 development and other non-financial assistance to public agencies,
11 nonprofit organizations, and tribal organizations to support program and
12 project development (§32378(b))
- 13 • Require grantees to specify the manner in which land to be acquired will
14 be managed and analyze a maintaining entity's capacity to support costs
15 of operations, maintenance, and management (§32364.5(b)(3),(4))

16

17 The Conservancy also faces certain important limitations and requirements,
18 including legislation directing that it:

- 19 • Shall not exercise the power of eminent domain (§32370)
- 20 • Shall use conservation easements to accomplish ecosystem restoration
21 wherever feasible (§32366(b))
- 22 • Does not have the power to regulate land use or activities on land
23 (§32381)
- 24 • Does not have any power over water rights held by others (§32381(c))
- 25 • Shall cooperate and consult with the city or county in which a grant is
26 proposed to be expended or an interest in real property is proposed to be
27 acquired, and shall also cooperate and consult as necessary with public
28 water system, levee, flood control or drainage agencies (§32363)

29

1 **Mission**

2
3 The Conservancy's Mission Statement is:

4 *Working collaboratively and in coordination with local communities, the*
5 *Conservancy will lead efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the Delta's*
6 *economy, agriculture and working landscapes, and environment, for*
7 *the benefit of the Delta region, its local communities, and the citizens of*
8 *California.*
9

10 **Governance**

11
12 The Conservancy is governed by a 23-member Board, including eleven voting
13 members, two non-voting members, and ten liaison advisors (§32330 *et seq.*)

14 The Board's chair is selected from among the five Delta county representatives
15 (§32332).

16 The voting members are:

- 17 • Member or designee appointed by the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors
- 18 • Member or designee appointed by the Sacramento Board of Supervisors
- 19 • Member or designee appointed by the San Joaquin Board of Supervisors
- 20 • Member or designee appointed by the Solano Board of Supervisors
- 21 • Member or designee appointed by the Yolo Board of Supervisors
- 22 • Two public members appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Senate
- 23 • One public member appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules
- 24 • One public member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly
- 25 • The Secretary of Resources or a designee
- 26 • The Director of Finance or a designee

27
28 The non-voting (ex officio) members are:

- 29 • A member of the Senate, appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules

- 1 • A member of the Assembly, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly

2

3 The liaison advisors are:

- 4 • One representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- 5 • One representative from the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service

- 6 • One representative of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

- 7 • One representative of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- 8 • A designee of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development
9 Commission

- 10 • A designee of the State Coastal Conservancy

- 11 • A designee of the Suisun Resource Conservation District

- 12 • A designee of the Central Valley Flood Protection Board

- 13 • A designee of the Delta Protection Commission

- 14 • A designee of the Yolo Basin Foundation

1 III. Context for the Strategic Plan

2 The Delta Conservancy is both similar to and different from the nine
3 state conservancies established before it. The enabling legislation
4 of most conservancies, including the Delta Conservancy, grants
5 authority to acquire and preserve land, to enhance public enjoyment
6 of the landscape, and to advance public education about each
7 region. Most enabling statutes also mention habitat restoration or
8 conservation as a major goal; four enabling statutes also focus on
9 preservation of working landscapes. The enhancement of water and
10 air quality, and resilience to natural disasters, are also typical
11 conservancy authorities.

12 Like other conservancies around the state, the Delta Conservancy has the
13 authority to own or manage land, to distribute grants, and to partner with non-
14 governmental organizations in pursuit of its mission. The Legislature intended
15 that the Delta Conservancy operate in a collaborative and cooperative fashion
16 with significant local input; the Conservancy is not intended to act as a regulator
17 or acquire land through the exercise of eminent domain.

18 The Delta Conservancy has a more complex and specific set of authorities than
19 most other conservancies and has some noteworthy differences in its powers and
20 responsibilities. Nearly all conservancies have the powers to acquire, exchange,
21 and improve land from willing sellers, but the Delta Conservancy is uniquely
22 required to “use conservation easements to accomplish ecosystem restoration
23 whenever feasible.” (§32366(b)) The Delta Conservancy is also the only state
24 conservancy explicitly empowered to acquire water rights and “take or fund
25 action” outside of the formal boundaries of its region subject to certain
26 conditions. (§32360.5)

27 The Delta Conservancy is also unique in that it was not established concurrent
28 with bond funding. Legislation creating the Conservancy also established a
29 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Fund, which may receive funds from
30 the legislature, future bonds, grants, and a wide variety of other sources, but does
31 not yet possess those funds to any considerable extent. The need to establish a
32 stable funding base for the Conservancy’s activities is a major priority of this
33 Strategic Plan.

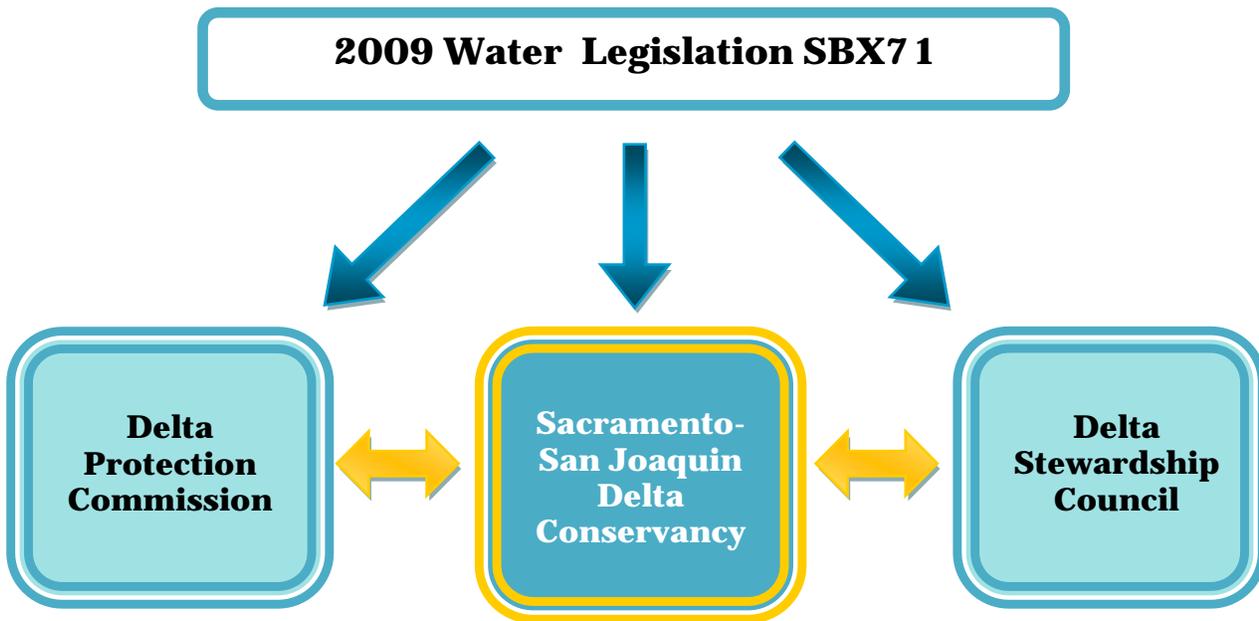
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Regional planning context

The challenges facing the Delta ecosystem and economy are the subject of several other initiatives from state, regional and local government that collectively form the context in which the Delta Conservancy must carry out its mission. The Legislature established the Conservancy and the Delta Stewardship Council and reshaped the Delta Protection Commission through the 2009 water legislation discussed above. The Legislature intended these three agencies to fulfill different yet interrelated and complementary, roles in the protection and enhancement of the Delta. The Delta Stewardship Council is charged with developing a long-term Delta Plan that will ensure a reliable water supply and a restored Delta ecosystem. The Delta Protection Commission’s goal is to ensure orderly, balanced conservation and development of Delta land resources and improved flood protection.

Figure 2: Roles and Relationships of Three Delta-focused State Agencies

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Principal Authorities

- May act as the facilitating agency for the implementation of any joint habitat restoration or enhancement programs located within the primary zone
- Prepare and adopt an economic sustainability plan that informs the Stewardship Council’s policies
- Regulate land use plans within the primary zone of the Delta
- Prepare a resource management plan

Principal Authorities

- Act as a primary agency to implement ecosystem restoration
- Support efforts to restore the Delta ecosystem and protect the economic well being of Delta residents

Principal Authorities

- Develop and implement a comprehensive, long term management plan for the Delta to further the co-equal goals of a more reliable water supply and protecting, restoring, and enhancing the Delta ecosystem
- Review local and regional planning documents for consistency with Delta Plan
- Hear appeals of consistency determinations for covered actions

21
22

1 The Delta Conservancy Act requires the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan to be
2 “consistent” with five other plans and laws. The goals, objectives and strategies
3 contained in this Strategic Plan have been crafted with the intent of ensuring
4 such consistency.⁹ The plans and laws are:

- 5 • The Delta Stewardship Council’s Delta Plan
- 6 • The Delta Protection Commission’s Land Use and Resource Management
7 Plan for the Primary Zone of the Delta (“RMP”)
- 8 • The 2012 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (“CVFPP”)
- 9 • The 2011 Habitat Management, Preservation and Restoration Plan for the
10 Suisun Marsh (“Suisun Marsh Plan”);¹⁰ and
- 11 • The Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977¹¹

12 Whether in final or draft form, these plans contain significant provisions
13 intended to shape Delta ecosystem restoration. As an example, the current Delta
14 Plan draft proposes to establish elevation-based habitat restoration zones
15 throughout the legal Delta and require that all habitat restoration actions be
16 “consistent” with those zones.

17 The draft Delta Plan contains no enforceable regulations pertaining to Delta
18 economic enhancement activities but does identify performance measures. Such
19 performance measures would be non-binding, and would assist the Delta
20 Stewardship Council in evaluating progress toward a sustainable Delta and
21 determining future policy initiatives.

22 The Delta Plan may also incorporate by reference, and provide for enforcement
23 of, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP). The BDCP intends to create an
24 integrated Conservation Strategy for the recovery of Delta species, habitats, and
25 natural communities listed under the federal and state Endangered Species
26 Acts.¹² The BDCP will identify a wide variety of specific Conservation Measures,

⁹ Two of the plans are currently under development: the Delta Plan and the CVFPP. This Strategic Plan relies on the most recent available versions, including the Fifth Staff Draft Delta Plan dated August 2, 2011. As the plans are completed and take effect the Conservancy will review this Strategic Plan for consistency and make appropriate modifications.

¹⁰ This is the date of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement.

¹¹ Public Resources Code §32376

¹² According to the Working Draft dated November 19, 2010

1 including several quantified habitat restoration goals, within eleven Conservation
2 Zones and five Restoration Opportunity Areas. The BDCP is intended to result in
3 long-term permits for the operation of a new conveyance facility and the current
4 water export facilities. The Delta Reform Act provides that the BDCP “shall be
5 considered for inclusion in the Delta Plan.”¹³ The draft Delta Plan states that “if
6 the BDCP is incorporated into the Delta Plan, it becomes part of the Delta Plan
7 and therefore part of the basis for future consistency determinations,” and that
8 the Delta Stewardship Council will “retain the authority upon appeal to find [a]
9 covered action inconsistent with BDCP and therefore the Delta Plan.”¹⁴ This
10 authority may extend to restoration and other qualifying activities undertaken by
11 the Conservancy.

12 The Delta Protection Commission’s RMP, completed in 2010, defines enforceable
13 land use standards for the Delta’s primary zone. These include the principle that
14 agriculture and agriculturally-supported land uses remain the “primary land
15 uses” in the primary zone and that recreation and natural resources uses “be
16 supported in appropriate locations and where conflicts with agricultural land
17 uses or other beneficial uses can be minimized” (Land Use Policy P-2).¹⁵ Habitat
18 and recreational land uses (among others) within the primary zone will have to
19 provide “appropriate buffer areas” to prevent conflict with existing agricultural
20 parcels (Land Use Policy P-3) and potentially “include an adequate financial
21 mechanism in any planned conversion of agricultural lands to wildlife habitat for
22 conservation purposes...[that] specifically offset[s] the loss of local government
23 and special district revenues necessary to support public services and
24 infrastructure” (Natural Resources Policy P-5). The RMP also supports safe
25 harbor agreements (Natural Resources Policy P-6) for agricultural lands and the
26 use of “appropriate incentives such as purchase of conservation easements” to
27 “encourage farmers...to maximize habitat values for migratory birds and other
28 wildlife” (Natural Resources Policy P-2).

¹³ Water Code §85320(a). The statute also describes a set of conditions under which the Council “shall” incorporate the BDCP into the Delta Plan. §85320(e).

¹⁴ Fifth Staff Draft Delta Plan, August 2, 2011 (“DP”) p. 62

¹⁵ References are to specific policies contained in different sections of the RMP. The document is available online at:

<http://www.delta.ca.gov/Land%20Use%20and%20Resource%20Management%20Plan%20for%20the%20Primary.htm>. (accessed April 26, 2012)

1 The CVFPP and the Suisun Marsh Plan are also reference points for consistency.
2 The public draft of the CVFPP, released in December 2011 and subject to
3 approval by the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, identifies a series of Flood
4 Management Elements that will update the State Plan of Flood Control facilities
5 throughout the Central Valley and improve overall system performance. In and
6 around the Delta, these elements include expansion and ecosystem enhancement
7 of the Yolo Bypass, evaluation of a new Lower San Joaquin River Bypass along
8 Paradise Cut in the south Delta, fish passage improvements in the Yolo Bypass,
9 and a variety of levee improvement projects in the vicinities of Stockton,
10 Sacramento, and West Sacramento. The CVFPP also contains a preliminary
11 version of a long-term Central Valley Flood System Conservation Framework that
12 includes strategy elements to “preserve important shaded riparian aquatic
13 habitat along riverbanks and help restore the regional continuity/connectivity of
14 such habitats” and to implement “integrated flood management projects” that
15 improve ecological conditions in addition to flood protection.¹⁶

16 The Suisun Marsh Plan of November 2011 (and its associated Environmental
17 Impact Report/Statement) is a comprehensive 30-year management plan. It was
18 developed through a collaborative process with stakeholder participation. The
19 Suisun Marsh Plan addresses conflicts regarding management of existing Marsh
20 resources, the enhancement and long-term management of managed wetlands,
21 and the restoration of tidal wetlands to contribute to the recovery of terrestrial
22 and aquatic listed species. The Plan calls for the tidal restoration of 5,000 –
23 7,000 acres of historically managed wetlands and the enhancement of 44,000 –
24 46,000 acres of existing managed wetlands.

25 The Conservancy’s planning context also includes ongoing city and county
26 planning activities, including general plans, HCPs under the federal Endangered
27 Species Act, and NCCPs under the California Endangered Species Act.¹⁷ These
28 plans have regulatory authority within their jurisdictions, and many of them will
29 identify specific restoration activities in addition to setting the local land use
30 context in which economic enhancement activities will take place. The
31 Legislature did not specify the same “consistency” requirement for the
32 Conservancy regarding this category of plans as for the five plans described

¹⁶ 2012 CVFPP Public Draft, December 2011 pp. 3-21, 3-22.

¹⁷ Fish and Game Code §§2050-2069

1 above. At a minimum, the Conservancy will benefit from coordination with these
2 locally binding documents. Other state and regional plans potentially influencing
3 the Conservancy’s planning context include the Land Management Plan for the
4 Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, the Central Valley Joint Venture 2006
5 Implementation Plan, and the California Coastal Conservancy’s Strategic Plan.

6 Numerous planning documents provide context for the Delta Conservancy’s
7 economic enhancement responsibilities. The Delta Protection Commission
8 recently completed its “Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San
9 Joaquin Delta” (ESP). The ESP identifies a large number of strategies to enhance
10 the Delta regional economy.¹⁸ The strategies with the most direct congruence to
11 the Conservancy’s mission include supporting growth in recreation and tourism,
12 supporting restoration strategies with “little or no conflict with the Delta
13 economy,” supporting “co-development” of restoration and recreation, and an
14 emphasis on conducting restoration on public land or land obtained from willing
15 sellers.¹⁹ Private and non-governmental organizations within the region, such as
16 the Discover the Delta Foundation, also have developed specific proposals to
17 achieve economic enhancement. In addition, local city and county general plans
18 govern land use decisions throughout the Delta region, and many have specific
19 strategies for economic enhancement.

20

21 **Funding context**

22 One of the most important characteristics of the Conservancy is its ability to
23 develop and use multiple funding sources. Given large uncertainties in
24 California’s economic and state budgetary context, the Conservancy will pursue
25 multiple avenues for funding using strategies identified in this Strategic Plan.

26 Based on current information, it is unclear when a long-anticipated bond
27 measure to finance water and ecosystem improvements statewide, including
28 significant potential financing for the Delta Conservancy, will be put before
29 voters; a bond measure in 2012 appears unlikely. SBX7 2, passed by the
30 Legislature in 2009, authorized state expenditure of \$11.14 billion in funds
31 should the voters approve such a bond. That total includes authorization of the

¹⁸ Version dated January 19, 2012. Parts of ESP may be included in the Delta Plan at the discretion of the Delta Stewardship Council.

¹⁹ ESP p. 276

1 expenditure of \$1.5 billion “for projects to protect and enhance the sustainability
2 of the Delta ecosystem,” including projects associated with the implementation of
3 the BDCP and “other projects to protect and restore native fish and wildlife
4 dependent on the Delta ecosystem” (§ 79731(b)). The legislation specifically
5 states that these funds “shall be available for appropriation to, among other
6 entities, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy for implementation
7 consistent with the Delta Plan” (§ 79731(c)).

8 In addition, the legislation authorizes expenditure of \$750 million for
9 “projects...that provide public benefits and support Delta sustainability options,”
10 including projects that “assist in preserving economically viable and sustainable
11 agriculture and other economic activities in the Delta” ((§ 79731(a)(1))). That
12 section of the legislation also authorizes potential expenditures for other capital-
13 intensive Delta sustainability objectives such as levee projects and water quality
14 improvements.

15 The current draft of the Delta Plan recommends that Delta Conservancy funding
16 be “no less than \$50 million,” allocated from already-existing bond funds or from
17 any future bond measures. The Plan describes this amount as the minimum
18 necessary for “building the capabilities to administer and monitor the
19 Conservancy’s projects, as well as funding initial early start projects approved by
20 the Conservancy Board”.²⁰ Other funding sources that could prove important to
21 the Conservancy’s near-term future include appropriations from the state general
22 fund, carbon offsets that would allow carbon emitters to pay Delta landowners for
23 carbon sequestration activities under AB 32’s implementation mechanisms (also
24 recommended by the Delta Plan), dedicated revenue streams from state
25 government such as a license plate fund, foundation programs, or revenue-
26 generating partnerships with major private or non-profit entities. The near-term
27 potential for the Conservancy to realize benefits from one or more of these
28 sources depends upon a range of national and state factors, including the
29 national economy and the state budget, and in some cases would require
30 additional legislative action.

31

²⁰ Delta Plan, 5th Staff Draft, p. 211

IV. Strategic Plan Development

This draft Strategic Plan has been developed through a multi-phase process that reflects the Conservancy’s commitment to collaboration, consultation, and transparency.

In Phase I the Strategic Plan team consulted widely with members of the Conservancy Board and the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan and Policy Subcommittee; key Delta stakeholder organizations in agriculture and other sectors; and local government officials and staff including county agriculture commissioners (See Appendix D: Stakeholders Consulted in the Development of the Delta Conservancy’s Strategic Plan). These activities began in November 2011 and continued into February 2012. The following is a summary of input received from key stakeholders about meeting the Conservancy’s co-equal responsibilities.

Phase I Input from Key Stakeholders

Agriculture and Working Landscapes

- Preserve agricultural lands and promote their potential habitat value as working landscapes
- Take advantage of farmers’ ability to do cost-effective restoration
- Don’t re-create the wheel; utilize and collaborate with existing agencies/organizations
- Recognize that there is significant variability across the Delta, including soil types and crops
- Respect the importance of flexibility and predictability for growers
- Support development of a Delta “brand”
- Address the challenges of invasive species
- Support the establishment of a multi-species safe harbor agreement and “good neighbor” policies
- Maintain support for a viable levee system

Tourism and Recreation

- Define and promote a Delta “brand;” encourage and build off other compatible branding efforts such as Solano Grown and the Delta Loop
- Support a useable boat landing that could be used for tourism
- Consider identifying and promoting tourism and recreation “hubs”
- Link to the agricultural economy through agri-tourism

- 1 • Work with agriculture, law enforcement, and local communities to
2 minimize the potential impacts of increased tourism and recreation
3

4 **Restoration**

- 5 • Support efforts to give “credit” to landowners who use practices that add
6 habitat value (e.g., pesticide management)
7 • Respect each landowner’s right to make individual choices related to
8 restoration
9 • Clearly define the word “restoration” so that people understand how the
10 Conservancy uses that term and can be confident that they are talking
11 about the same thing
12 • Support “good neighbor” policies to help avoid crop damage and
13 terrestrial species impacts
14 • Support restoration projects that are:
15 ○ Based on sound science
16 ○ Transparent and accessible
17 ○ Participatory
18 ○ Drawn from local knowledge
19 • Focus restoration efforts on lands having lower agricultural “value”
20 • Pursue restoration on existing public lands, whenever possible, to avoid
21 loss of tax revenue
22 • Link restoration projects with recreational access and services to create
23 economic value for restored land
24 • Land ownership should be based on a “willing seller” approach
25 • Serve as a recognized source of reliable information about Delta
26 restoration projects
27

28 **Other Input**

- 29 • Help increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters
30 through preparedness and response
31 • Support environmental education
32 • Preserve cultural and historical resources within the Delta, including
33 Legacy Communities
34 • Support the overall economy of the Delta
35 • Participate in development and implementation of relevant habitat
36 conservation plans (HCPs)
37 • Promote the integration of local knowledge in decision making about the
38 Delta
39 • Advocate for Delta outcomes that promote the co-equal responsibilities
40 and Conservancy mandates
41

42 In Phase II the Strategic Plan team organized and conducted five public input
43 meetings, one in each of the five Delta counties. Each meeting was designed to

1 educate members of the public about the Strategic Plan development process,
2 present preliminary ideas about roles the Conservancy might play in the Delta,
3 and gather input about those and other potential roles for the Conservancy.
4 These public meetings took place during January-February 2012 at the following
5 locations: Rush Ranch (Solano); Peter's Steak House (Isleton); Clarksburg
6 Community Church (Yolo); Antioch Community Center (Contra Costa); and the
7 San Joaquin WorkNet Building (Stockton). The "Phase I Input from Key
8 Stakeholders" described above was presented at all public meetings. These
9 examples and other input offered by a wide range of individuals and
10 organizations interested in the Conservancy and its mission constitute a
11 significant contribution to the goals, objectives, and strategies in this plan.

12 In Phase III a public draft plan was prepared with input from the Subcommittee
13 and posted on the Conservancy's web page for public comment from March 26 to
14 April 20. The Strategic Plan team conducted three public work sessions for
15 discussion of the public draft plan in Rio Vista (April 10), Clarksburg (April 12),
16 and Oakley (April 14) that were each attended by at least one Conservancy Board
17 member. Conservancy staff also made presentations about the draft public plan
18 at county supervisor meetings in all five Delta counties, and conducted follow up
19 discussions with key Delta stakeholder organizations. This Strategic Plan is part
20 of Phase IV. It reflects the full range of input on the draft public plan, including
21 written comments that can be viewed on the Conservancy's web site.

22

23 **Future opportunities for input**

24 This Strategic Plan will be presented to the Conservancy's Board for deliberation
25 at its May 16, 2012 meeting, revised as needed, and considered for adoption on
26 June 27, 2012 according to the current schedule. Consistent with the
27 Conservancy's commitment to collaboration and openness, comments for the
28 Board at its meetings are welcome.

29

30

1 V. Priorities and Criteria

2 The legislature specified that the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan “shall
3 establish priorities and criteria for projects and programs, based
4 upon an assessment of program requirements, institutional
5 capabilities, and funding needs throughout the Delta.” Viewed in the
6 broader context of the statute, that direction reflects an expectation
7 that the Conservancy would have funding available to support
8 projects and programs consistent with its authorities.

9 As noted elsewhere in this plan, the legislation established a Delta Conservancy
10 Fund in the State Treasury and directed that “funds provided for ecosystem
11 restoration and enhancement shall be available for ecosystem restoration
12 projects *consistent with the conservancy’s strategic plan* adopted pursuant to
13 Section 32376.” [PRC 32360(b)(2)] (emphasis added) The statute provides
14 authority for the Conservancy to “expend funds and award grants and loans to
15 facilitate collaborative planning efforts and to develop *projects and programs*
16 that are designed to further the purposes of this division.” [PRC 32378(a)]
17 (emphasis added) In a different section the statute authorizes the Conservancy to
18 “fund or award grants for plans and feasibility studies *consistent with its*
19 *strategic plan* or the Delta Plan.” [PRC 32364(c)] (emphasis added)

20 This Strategic Plan includes initial priorities and criteria that are responsive to
21 the Legislature’s direction, including the Conservancy’s ongoing assessment of
22 requirements, capabilities, and funding needs. They reflect the reality of the
23 Conservancy’s current scenario (see Section VII), and allow for future refinement
24 in response to changed circumstances.

25 **Assessment**

26 The Conservancy is in the process of assessing program requirements, the
27 capabilities of existing institutions, its own capabilities, and funding needs
28 throughout the Delta. As noted elsewhere, Conservancy staff met extensively with
29 colleagues in other state, local, and federal agencies, and with other institutions
30 such as land trusts to clarify existing capabilities and needs. The Conservancy
31 also has initiated development of its own Finance Plan to define funding needs.

1 **Priorities**

2 The Conservancy's priorities are shaped by the interaction of two factors: funding
3 and plans. These interactions are discussed in detail in Section VII,
4 Implementing the Strategic Plan, in the context of four scenarios that reflect low
5 or high funding for the Conservancy and the uncertain status of relevant planning
6 documents.

7 In the current situation, where the Conservancy has limited funding and the
8 planning context is uncertain, the Conservancy's priorities are:

- 9 • Potential opportunities to advance the Conservancy's mission that do not
10 require additional Conservancy funding and match existing
11 organizational resources. This would include convening a voluntary
12 Restoration Network to coordinate and integrate early restoration in the
13 Delta, and exploring a collaborative Delta Branding effort
- 14 • Relationships with other local, state, and federal agencies, non-public
15 organizations, and key stakeholders, and education across the Delta about
16 the Conservancy's roles
- 17 • Organizational capacity and future funding sources

18 The Conservancy will use information gathered through its ongoing assessment,
19 including its own Finance Plan, to identify future priorities for programs and
20 funding. These will become relevant as the Conservancy transitions into other
21 scenarios described below and in Section VII.

22 **Criteria**

23 The Conservancy will develop funding criteria to support future grant making in
24 a manner consistent with legal and other requirements. Because of the legal and
25 regulatory aspects of grant making the Strategic Plan is not the appropriate
26 vehicle for such an effort. These criteria, once developed, will ensure that the
27 Conservancy is prepared to fulfill the Legislature's intent once funding becomes
28 available to support its mission.

29 In the meantime the Conservancy will continue to rely on the mandates and
30 authorities in its legislation as criteria for decision-making about program
31 direction and resource commitments. The five criteria described below reflect
32 those mandates and authorities as well as input gathered through interviews and

1 public meetings as part of the process of preparing this Strategic Plan. They are
2 consistent with the Conservancy's assessment process described above. The
3 Conservancy anticipates that these criteria will be refined, and new criteria
4 developed, in the context of specific future Conservancy projects.

5 *1. Balance.* The Conservancy will develop and implement a balanced
6 program: a fair distribution of costs and benefits between its co-equal
7 responsibilities and the geographic distribution of its projects. The Conservancy
8 will make every effort, over time, to allocate resources and activities equitably
9 across the Conservancy's service area. Even so, in the initial years of operations,
10 the diversity, complexity, and uniqueness of the Delta may create challenges in
11 achieving this objective. The Conservancy will continue to identify efforts and
12 activities with Delta-wide applications and benefits, including information
13 collection and dissemination.

14 *2. Multiple Benefits.* The Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities are not
15 mutually exclusive. The Conservancy values projects and activities that provide
16 multiple benefits consistent with program goals. The Conservancy will actively
17 look for opportunities to fulfill its mission by identifying and providing multiple
18 benefits and will encourage its partners and collaborators to do the same. The
19 Conservancy will not create barriers between efforts and activities that advance
20 environmental protection on the one hand and those that advance the economic
21 well-being of Delta residents on the other hand. At the same time, the
22 Conservancy understands that multiple benefits will not be available for all
23 projects, or may not necessarily be equal for a single project or initiative, and will
24 apply a flexible and practical approach. It will lead through collaboration and
25 cooperation with others to identify and integrate the environmental, economic,
26 and social needs linked to sometimes- conflicting goals and desired outcomes of
27 various Delta-focused constituencies.

28 *3. Ecosystem Restoration and Economic Development Models.* The
29 Conservancy will encourage the use of multiple models to support decision
30 making. In its role as a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration
31 in the Delta the Conservancy anticipates using models as it makes choices about
32 participating in, supporting, managing, or leading specific restoration activities
33 or programs developed outside the Conservancy. In some cases these may come
34 from the proposed restoration activity or program; in other cases the

1 Conservancy may look to the scientific and technical expertise of the Delta
2 Stewardship Council’s Science Program or the Independent Science Board, as
3 well as a Delta Restoration Network (see Goal 3 below. In carrying out its
4 economic development role the Delta the Conservancy anticipates using models
5 as it make choices about participating in, supporting, managing, or leading
6 specific development activities or programs developed outside the Conservancy.
7 The Conservancy will develop its own complementary criteria to use with models,
8 including attention to local, on-the-ground knowledge, and will rely on its
9 Independent Technical Advisory Board (“ITAB”) where appropriate.

10 4. *Mitigation of Impacts.* The Conservancy will be sensitive to impacts,
11 both direct and indirect, of its programs. In general, projects that mitigate
12 impacts are more likely to fit the Conservancy’s mission and receive support.
13 Experience has shown that differences in perspective about (1) the nature and
14 extent of impacts, (2) whether they are unavoidable, and (3) appropriate
15 mitigation or compensation, are inevitable. The Conservancy intends to develop
16 its own mitigation policies in consultation with a range of stakeholders, including
17 state and local agencies, other conservancies, not-for-profit organizations, and
18 individual landowners. The process will be open and transparent and will
19 incorporate local perspectives.

20 5. *Climate Change.* The Conservancy’s Board has adopted a Climate
21 Change policy that is included as Appendix C to this plan. The Conservancy’s
22 policy will be a consistent criterion for decision making. The policy will influence
23 evaluation of proposed projects and implementation of those identified for
24 support, and will be part of consultation with the ITAB. The Conservancy
25 anticipates supporting efforts to identify and address information and assistance
26 needs for long-term adaptation of Delta communities to the effects of climate
27 change, including sea level rise. Modeling effects and responses associated with
28 climate change and sea level rise also may present opportunities for collaboration
29 with other state conservancies.

30
31

1 VI. Goals and Objectives

2 This Strategic Plan is built
3 primarily around goals, objectives
4 and strategies. There are six
5 goals (see sidebar) that express
6 the range of activities for the
7 Delta Conservancy, both now
8 and in the foreseeable future.
9 The first four goals address
10 substantive program priorities;
11 the latter two goals address
12 organizational and funding
13 priorities. The order of goals is
14 not intended as a strict sequence
15 of Conservancy priorities.

16 For each goal the plan identifies
17 multiple objectives: these are focused,
18 actionable and in some cases
19 measurable components of the goals.
20 One or more strategies are associated
21 with each objective. These are potential
22 actions that the Conservancy may
23 undertake to achieve its objectives and
24 goals. The goals, objectives and
25 strategies are intended to cover the
26 range of responsibilities and authorities
27 that the Legislature articulated for the Conservancy in its enabling legislation. As
28 explained in Section VII, they are presented as a suite of linked choices for the
29 Conservancy that will be shaped primarily by two factors: funding and the status
30 of key plans. The Conservancy will not pursue every goal, objective, or strategy
31 presented in this plan at the same time or with the same level of resources, but
32 will match its choices to circumstances and opportunities.

Goal 1: Establish the Conservancy as a valuable partner with Delta growers, agriculture-related businesses, and residents in protecting and enhancing the Delta's agricultural and working landscapes and sense of place

Goal 2: Lead economic enhancement activities that support the Delta ecosystem and economy

Goal 3: Lead efforts in protecting, enhancing and restoring the Delta ecosystem in coordination with other governmental and non-governmental entities and citizens in the Delta

Goal 4: Establish the Conservancy as a leader in gathering and communicating scientific and practical information about the Delta ecosystem and economy

Goal 5: Create an effective organization based on principles of collaboration, coordination, appropriate transparency, and efficient use of resources to fulfill the Conservancy's mission and deliver its programs

Goal 6: Establish a stable, diversified, and self-sustaining funding base for the Conservancy

1 **Goal 1: Establish the Conservancy as a valuable**
2 **partner with Delta growers, agriculture-related**
3 **businesses, and residents in protecting and enhancing**
4 **the Delta’s agricultural and working landscapes and**
5 **sense of place**
6

7 The Delta’s economy and cultural heritage revolve around agriculture. With
8 almost half a million acres of highly productive soils, the Delta is one of
9 California’s oldest and most prominent agricultural landscapes. Its rich heritage
10 includes pioneering reclamation efforts, ethnically diverse landholding, and
11 technological inventiveness. Delta farmers continue to innovate today,
12 introducing new crops and dynamic enterprises to the region on a routine basis.
13 The legacy communities along the Sacramento River and elsewhere are a living
14 testament to the Delta’s unique history and continuing vitality.

15 The Conservancy will aid in protecting, enhancing and celebrating Delta
16 agriculture and the special character of its working landscape in new ways that
17 are synergistic with improving water quality and habitat conservation and with
18 adaptation to climate change, sea level rise, and subsidence of soils. Consistent
19 with the other goals in this Strategic Plan, this means supporting agriculture and
20 economic activity even as the ecosystem is restored. It means identifying ways
21 for landowners to derive economic benefits from other uses of their agricultural
22 lands. It also means developing policies to deal with a changing future, including
23 climate change and sea level rise, and assisting Delta communities in adapting to
24 the effects of those changes. The Conservancy intends to become a bridging agent
25 that embraces ecosystem services across a broad spectrum of types of wetland,
26 agricultural and urban ecosystems.

27 The Conservancy will also work to communicate the unique value of the Delta to
28 the rest of California and the nation, particularly the large metropolitan regions
29 of Sacramento, Stockton and the Bay Area just on the edges of the Delta, as well
30 as those in Southern California. If California’s urban populations understand and
31 value the Delta, resources to protect and celebrate the region’s unique character
32 are more likely to be a priority for legislators and other funders.

33 Water is essential for agriculture and for the Delta ecosystem, and the
34 Conservancy is authorized to support efforts that protect and improve water

1 quality, thereby advancing environmental protection and the economic well being
2 of Delta residents. The Conservancy's roles in relation to the Delta's water
3 resources, and the complex planning and policy processes that affect these
4 resources will evolve over time, consistent with its authorities. The Conservancy
5 will support water quality actions that are consistent with its mission and
6 resources.

7
8 Objective 1.1: Collaborate with others to develop educational materials,
9 promotional materials and visual representations of the Delta that enhance and
10 communicate a sense of place and promote Delta products

- 11 ○ Strategy 1.1.1: Collaborate with regional educators, non-profits, county
12 agriculture commissioners, local historical societies, artisans, and others
13 to develop educational materials and activities for K-12 students
14 representing significant and distinctive aspects of the Delta
- 15 ○ Strategy 1.1.2: Convene a group of Delta interests (e.g., legacy community
16 historians, business leaders, agricultural leaders, educators, residents,
17 etc.) to identify common themes that can be used in a unified marketing
18 program to promote in statewide and national media outlets the value of
19 the Delta, its legacy communities, its agriculture, and its recreation
20 opportunities
- 21 ○ Strategy 1.1.3: Provide support for the Delta Protection Commission's
22 effort to explore federal designation of the Delta as a National Heritage
23 Area

24
25 Objective 1.2: Assist in enhancing Delta agriculture

- 26 ○ Strategy 1.2.1: Collaborate with growers and academic institutions to
27 support ongoing applied research on potential crops and cropping
28 patterns that complement ecosystem restoration efforts in the Delta and
29 reflect understanding of sea level rise and subsidence
- 30 ○ Strategy 1.2.2: Work with federal and state officials to assure Delta
31 farmers have access to full information about U. S. Department of
32 Agriculture and state working lands programs

- 1 ○ Strategy 1.2.3: Assist in developing a model agricultural enhancement
2 ordinance that could be used in Delta counties to reduce regulatory
3 barriers to on-farm production of value-added goods and on-farm retail
4 sales
- 5 ○ Strategy 1.2.4: Assist in reducing regulatory barriers to siting of
6 agricultural processing facilities or low-impact recreational facilities
7 within Delta floodplains
8

9 Objective 1.3: Aid in protecting and improving water quality to protect the Delta
10 ecosystem and economy

- 11 ○ Strategy 1.3.1: Adopt policies, including restoration criteria, and support
12 projects that contribute to Delta water quality conditions that support the
13 Conservancy's mission
- 14 ○ Strategy 1.3.2: Ensure that Conservancy actions and projects are
15 consistent with water quality criteria in the Delta Plan, official plans and
16 regulations of the State Water Resources Control Board and the San
17 Francisco Bay and Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Boards,
18 and the constitutional principles of reasonable use and public trust
- 19 ○ Strategy 1.3.3: Provide materials and information to educate the general
20 public about Delta water quality issues
- 21 ○ Strategy 1.3.4: Coordinate with appropriate State agencies and
22 stakeholders in documenting and disseminating accurate information
23 about Delta water quality, water conservation practices, and Delta flow
24 needs

25

26 Objective 1.4: Support implementation of plans and programs of federal, state
27 and local agencies to provide flood resilience from subsidence and catastrophic
28 events in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission

- 29 ○ Strategy 1.4.1: Ensure Conservancy projects maintain or improve levee
30 stability on Conservancy-owned lands except where levees are to be
31 removed

- 1 ○ **Strategy 1.4.2: Collaborate on development of eco-friendly levee designs**
2 **and subsidence reversal for incorporation into Conservancy projects or**
3 **projects of the Delta Restoration Network (see Goal 3 below)**
- 4 ○ **Strategy 1.4.3: In collaboration with local governments, the Delta**
5 **Protection Commission, and the California Emergency Management**
6 **Agency, assist in identifying and implementing emergency staging areas**
7 **for flood response**
- 8 ○ **Strategy 1.4.4: Work with Delta growers and landowners and the ITAB to**
9 **identify areas for implementation of subsidence mitigation, potentially**
10 **including rice and carbon sequestration wetlands, and promote best**
11 **management practices resulting from current research on subsidence**
12 **reversal.**

13

14 **Object 1.5: Promote integration of Delta agriculture with other elements of the**
15 **Conservancy’s mission**

- 16 ○ **Strategy 1.5.1: Create an explicit preference for integrative approaches as a**
17 **criterion for Conservancy support of projects. Such approaches potentially**
18 **would enhance agricultural potential, restore or conserve habitat , and**
19 **promote economic well being**

20

21

1 Goal 2: Lead economic enhancement activities that 2 support the Delta ecosystem and economy 3

4 The Delta economy relies upon the productivity of Delta soils and the people who
5 work them. Since shortly after the Gold Rush enterprising residents have made
6 the Delta into a unique and productive agricultural region. Enhancement of the
7 Delta economy into the future will require development of new economic
8 opportunities for Delta residents while preserving the existing agricultural and
9 recreational activities that form the foundation of the region's economy.

10 There are ample opportunities for these economic activities to enhance the Delta
11 ecosystem as well. Highly successful models of wildlife-friendly farming and
12 recreation-friendly restoration projects already exist and could be replicated in
13 other locations around the region. The Conservancy will play a key role in
14 advancing those efforts and in innovating new ideas. These may include a "Delta
15 brand" program and regulatory streamlining to directly support Delta
16 agriculture, actions to enhance Delta tourism and recreation, and exploration of
17 opportunities for profit-making carbon storage activities on Delta lands. In
18 addition, as described in Goal 3, the Conservancy will pursue opportunities to
19 design restoration projects that promote continued economic use of restored
20 lands. These efforts will include seeking appropriate legal advice to ensure
21 activities do not create extra regulatory burdens for farmers and other
22 landowners.

23 The Conservancy can serve as a convener for project-focused economic
24 enhancement task forces. In this role the Conservancy will leverage and
25 coordinate the knowledge activities of a wide range of partners. The Conservancy
26 plans to create an Economic Development Program that will operate in an open
27 and collaborative manner with its task forces, as well as with Delta residents and
28 businesses more broadly. The Delta Protection Commission will be a potentially
29 important collaborator as the Conservancy develops specific economic
30 enhancement projects.
31

1 Objective 2.1: Develop economic enhancement proposals and projects in
2 collaboration with existing governmental and non-governmental entities,
3 residents and private enterprises

- 4 ○ Strategy 2.1.1: Identify specific elements of the Delta Protection
5 Commission's ESP that are consistent with the Conservancy's mission and
6 incorporate those into the Conservancy's Economic Development
7 Program
- 8 ○ Strategy 2.1.2: Create project-focused task forces of local interested
9 parties (e.g., Delta businesses, residents, and government agencies) to
10 develop proposals, funding applications, or business plans for specific
11 economic enhancement projects such as a Delta branding program, Delta
12 agri-tourism, or carbon storage projects. Such projects could include
13 improving visitor accessibility to the Delta by identifying and
14 concentrating investments in visitor-supporting infrastructure, improving
15 facilities and signage in these areas, and exploring public support for
16 Scenic Byway status for Highway 160. This strategy may also include
17 consideration and support, where appropriate, for implementation of the
18 recommendations contained in California State Parks' "Recreation
19 Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh"
20 (2011).
- 21 ○ Strategy 2.1.3: Collaborate with the Delta Protection Commission-led
22 effort to establish the Delta Trail and identify specific business
23 opportunities for Delta landowners related to it
24
- 25 ○ Strategy 2.1.4: Conduct a complete recreation survey of the Delta and use
26 the information to support secure funding to inform efforts to enhance
27 recreational opportunities
28
29

30 Objective 2.2: Investigate mechanisms for mitigating impacts to agriculture from
31 projects that enhance recreation and tourism or habitat restoration

- 32 ○ Strategy 2.2.1: Complete a feasibility study of farmland mitigation
33 mechanisms to be implemented by lead restoration agencies, including

1 **development of a list of current Delta county agricultural land mitigation**
2 **ordinances and policies**

- 3 ○ **Strategy 2.2.2: Work with local residents and law enforcement to develop**
4 **mechanisms and methods to reduce impacts from increased usage of the**
5 **Delta resulting from recreation and tourism or habitat restoration**
6 **projects**

7
8
9

1 **Goal 3: Lead efforts in protecting, enhancing, and**
2 **restoring the Delta ecosystem in coordination with other**
3 **governmental and non-governmental entities and**
4 **citizens in the Delta**
5

6 The Delta ecosystem is highly diverse and complex, with habitats, elevations, and
7 water quality needs varying over wide ranges. It is characterized by land-water
8 interfaces of varying types: tidal marshes, freshwater wetlands, floodplains, and
9 open water habitats. There are large areas of terrestrial habitat of high ecological
10 value: riparian forests, managed farmlands, and dunes and grasslands.

11 Restoration of the Delta ecosystem will require efforts to address all of these
12 varied land and water management challenges and opportunities, and to
13 coordinate and prioritize among them.

14 The Delta is a very large region, with numerous localized ecosystem contexts.
15 Habitat restoration projects should consider landscape-scale elements in their
16 design, including connectivity between restored areas and the consideration of
17 the full life cycle of species intended to benefit from restoration projects.

18 Restoration of Delta ecosystems should include consideration of ecosystem
19 threats and stressors to the processes, habitats and species it seeks to restore, as
20 well as consideration of the water flows necessary to make restoration projects
21 successful.

22 The Legislature directed that the Conservancy act as a primary state agency to
23 implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta.²¹ The Conservancy will participate
24 in restoration to the extent that projects are consistent with Conservancy
25 mission, policies, and authorities and funding is available. As noted earlier in this
26 plan, the Conservancy's ecosystem restoration activities must be consistent with
27 the Delta Plan and other specified regional planning documents. In addition, the
28 Conservancy will strive for consistency with the local HCPs and NCCPs currently
29 underway in Delta counties. This will require a high level of coordination among
30 the many governmental and non-governmental entities with important roles in
31 Delta restoration.

²¹ The Legislature did not identify restoration targets for the Conservancy or authorize the Conservancy to determine when restoration in the Delta is "complete" for purposes of achieving the state's policy goals.

1 In this context, a key role for the Conservancy is to convene and lead—through
2 actions consistent with its authorities—a voluntary Delta Restoration Network
3 (“Network”) of implementing agencies, entities and local interests with
4 knowledge about restoration opportunities and concerns. The Network will
5 promote information sharing and its members
6 will jointly develop a voluntary, comprehensive
7 Delta restoration framework in order to
8 encourage coordinated actions among willing
9 governmental and non-governmental entities and
10 private landowners engaged in Delta restoration
11 and habitat management. Individual
12 participation at the local and community level, as
13 well as from state, local, and federal government
14 agencies and non-profits, will be an important
15 objective. Engaging high-level management of
16 network member entities will help ensure
17 success. The Network will bridge the gap between high-level Delta planning
18 efforts and on-the-ground implementation of projects through a landscape-level
19 determination of restoration opportunities. The Conservancy’s role will be
20 consistent with its commitment to collaboration; it will act as a convener and
21 facilitator of the Network, and as a synthesizer with other Network members to
22 integrate Delta restoration activities into an overarching framework for
23 coordination.

**A Delta Restoration Network
will be:**

- Entirely voluntary
- Open to agencies, organizations, and landowners involved in Delta restoration
- A forum for coordination and information sharing
- Convened and facilitated by the Conservancy

24 The Conservancy will develop criteria for its own participation in restoration
25 projects, including mitigation projects sponsored or funded by other lead
26 agencies. Effective methods and commitments for long-term monitoring and
27 maintenance of projects, including use of endowments as a funding source, are
28 one possible example. These criteria are not intended to displace criteria
29 developed by other restoration agencies, but rather to reflect the Conservancy’s
30 mission, goals, objectives, and strategies.

31 The BDCP, Suisun Marsh Plan, and various HCP/NCCPs have restoration targets
32 that must be met to satisfy regulatory requirements. These targets are species-
33 and habitat-specific and include a temporal element. Through the Network, the
34 Conservancy will promote shared understanding of the different targets and joint

1 exploration of opportunities for “credit” towards these targets. It will be
2 important to engage regulatory and resource agencies in this effort, as well as
3 other stakeholders and interested landowners. The relationship of the
4 Conservancy’s restoration policies and criteria to crediting opportunities will also
5 be addressed. One potential outcome will be a description of the relationship of
6 restoration targets and credits in the restoration framework.

7 Given the Conservancy’s mission, another high priority is to develop models for
8 Conservancy land management that preserve economic uses of the land. There
9 are precedents for this in the Delta, where farming can be undertaken in a
10 manner beneficial to migratory birds and where restoration projects can
11 incorporate revenue-generating recreational uses like boating and fishing. The
12 Conservancy will develop similar multiple-purpose landscapes and promote
13 recognition of privately managed lands that already provide ecological value as
14 part of a joint restoration framework for the region.

15

16 Objective 3.1: Identify restoration priorities in collaboration with existing federal,
17 state, regional and local governmental and non-governmental entities engaged in
18 Delta restoration

- 19 ○ Strategy 3.1.1: Convene a voluntary, broad-based “Delta Restoration
20 Network” to share information, jointly develop a restoration framework to
21 coordinate actions among governmental and non-governmental entities
22 engaged in Delta restoration and habitat management, and develop
23 landscape-level models
- 24 ○ Strategy 3.1.2: Identify mechanisms to resolve conflicts and leverage
25 opportunities between Delta Plan restoration policies and local HCPs, and
26 resolve potential duplication between various restoration plans, through
27 the Delta Restoration Network
28
- 29 ○ Strategy 3.1.3: Lead the Delta Restoration Network to develop criteria for
30 prioritization and integration of large-scale ecosystem restoration in the
31 Delta and Suisun Marsh, with local input and use of best available science
32 as foundational principles

- 1 ○ Strategy 3.1.4: Consult with the Delta Science Program to incorporate best
2 available science about the historical landscape, landscape ecology
3 principles, landscape-level conceptual models, habitat reference sites
4 relevant to Delta restoration, and adaptive management
- 5 ○ Strategy 3.1.5: Participate actively in shaping ecosystem restoration
6 sections of the Delta Plan in future updates, and in feasibility studies
7 related to multiple-use flood bypasses in and around the Delta
- 8 ○ Strategy 3.1.6: Through the diverse participants in the Network promote
9 communication and coordination among different restoration agencies
10 and programs about potential land acquisition from willing sellers

11

12 Objective 3.2: Lead Delta ecosystem restoration activities consistent with
13 Conservancy authorities, the Delta Plan and other regional plans and guidance,
14 through a a voluntary Delta Restoration Network, and based on adaptive
15 management

- 16 ○ Strategy 3.2.1: Protect, enhance and restore large areas of interconnected
17 intertidal marsh, floodplain, transitional and upland habitats
- 18 ○ Strategy 3.2.2: Establish, enhance and maintain migratory corridors for
19 fish, birds and other animals
- 20 ○ Strategy 3.2.3: Protect and enhance wetland and upland habitats on
21 subsidized lands, as consistent with agricultural operations
- 22 ○ Strategy 3.2.4: Optimize the value of flooded deep islands for aquatic
23 species, as well as for recreation, tourism and water quality
- 24 ○ Strategy 3.2.5: Reduce threats and stresses to the processes, habitats, and
25 species that are "targets" of ecosystem restoration goals
- 26 ○ Strategy 3.2.6: Ensure appropriate consistency of potential Conservancy-
27 led restoration activities with the Delta Plan, the CVFPP, the Delta
28 Protection Commission's RMP, the Suisun Marsh Plan, and the Suisun
29 Marsh Preservation Act

30

31

1 **Objective 3.3: Identify appropriate and feasible opportunities for direct**
2 **Conservancy sponsorship of, or participation in, ecosystem restoration projects**

- 3 ○ Strategy 3.3.1: Establish criteria for Conservancy participation in Delta
4 ecosystem restoration projects, including any projects resulting from
5 implementation of the BDCP and any mitigation projects, including
6 criteria for appropriate community outreach and coordination with
7 adjacent landowners
- 8 ○ Strategy 3.3.2: In consultation with the voluntary Delta Restoration
9 Network, identify areas of particular restoration interest and assess the
10 potential for conservation easement purchase, mitigation banking, option
11 agreements, or other long-term transfer plans from “willing sellers”
- 12 ○ Strategy 3.3.3: Establish methods of prioritizing specific ecosystem
13 restoration opportunities for potential Conservancy sponsorship or
14 participation, including evaluating issues such as technical feasibility,
15 financial feasibility, likelihood of significant ecological benefits, utilizing
16 “marginal” lands such as berms or in-channel islands, impacts on
17 adjacent landowners, and vulnerability of project outcomes to forces
18 beyond the Conservancy’s control
- 19 ○ Strategy 3.3.4: Utilize existing planning tools, including Delta GIS Land
20 Suitability Analysis Models and on-the-ground surveys of lands (owned
21 by willing landowners and with their explicit permission), to identify
22 locations for potential restoration, and establish rigorous due diligence
23 process for any potential acquisition
- 24 ○ Strategy 3.3.5: Develop financial and ecological models for each project
25 prior to acquisition or implementation that incorporate all costs,
26 including future land management and maintenance activities, and only
27 implement those that achieve desired benefits at acceptable long-term
28 cost
- 29 ○ Strategy 3.3.6: Utilize expertise of private landowners, consultants, and
30 federal and state agencies in implementation of projects and long-term
31 land management and maintenance
32

- 1 ○ Strategy 3.3.7: Identify best practices in mitigation planning through
2 consultation with other public land management and recreational
3 agencies that have experience, including the East Bay Regional Park
4 District
- 5 ○ Strategy 3.3.8: Evaluate options for public/private partnerships to
6 develop restoration projects
7
- 8 Objective 3.4: Provide for long-term stewardship of restored landscapes to ensure
9 that the conservation values of each location are preserved and maintained over
10 time
- 11 ○ Strategy 3.4.1: Work with the non-profit land trusts and other Delta
12 interests to identify the most cost-effective and appropriate landholder
13 and land steward for each restoration site
- 14 ○ Strategy 3.4.2: Require the development of interim and long-term
15 stewardship plans, including identification of long-term monitoring
16 needs, contingency funding needs, opportunities for payments in lieu of
17 taxes, and potential for long-term stewardship endowment funding, for
18 each restored landscape prior to initiating restoration
- 19 ○ Strategy 3.4.3: Require that lands not held directly by a trustee agency are
20 encumbered either by conservation easements or deed restrictions
21 requiring a long performance term that include stewardship plans, and
22 provide endowment funds to a third party for compliance monitoring
- 23 ○ Strategy 3.4.4: Develop agreements with appropriate state agencies and
24 others for third-party easements with an option for the Conservancy to
25 hold easements
- 26
- 27 Objective 3.5: Assess the potential for Conservancy-led habitat restoration and
28 compatible recreational and tourism development of publicly owned lands, and
29 implement feasible projects as funding is available.
- 30 ○ Strategy 3.5.1: Collaborate with government agencies and non-
31 governmental organizations to assess the potential of existing publically-

1 owned lands for habitat restoration and compatible recreation and
2 tourism development

- 3 ○ Strategy 3.5.2: Establish protocols for Conservancy partnerships to
4 develop habitat restoration and eco-friendly recreation and tourism
5 facilities on publically-owned land

6

7 Objective 3.6: Provide incentives and acknowledgement to private landowners
8 who maintain and create wildlife habitat on private lands

- 9 ○ Strategy 3.6.1: In consultation with the Delta Restoration Network (see
10 Strategy 3.1.1), develop a system of incentives for maintaining and
11 creating habitat on private lands
- 12 ○ Strategy 3.6.2: Provide for mitigation for adjacent landowners by working
13 with regulatory agencies to develop agreements or new mechanisms
14 designed to ensure private landowners adjacent to lands that contribute
15 to habitat restoration goals are not adversely affected by incidental
16 occurrences of protected species, such as providing take authority or
17 finding funding to install fish screens
- 18 ○ Strategy 3.6.3: Develop pilot projects with willing landowners to test the
19 feasibility of landowner contribution to habitat restoration goals,
20 including federal Safe Harbor Agreements

21

22 Objective 3.7: Implement restoration projects that provide compatible economic
23 use for landowners or adjacent businesses

- 24 ○ Strategy 3.7.1: Design restoration projects that allow for activities that
25 create revenue, including wildlife-friendly farming practices, boating, and
26 bird-watching, to help pay for long-term maintenance and stewardship of
27 the property
- 28 ○ Strategy 3.7.2: Work with regulatory agencies to develop criteria to allow
29 integration of public access into restoration projects where appropriate
30 and compatible with surrounding land uses

1 **Goal 4: Establish the Conservancy as a leader in**
2 **gathering and communicating scientific and practical**
3 **information about the Delta ecosystem and economy**
4

5 The Conservancy will play an important role as a distributor of information to
6 Delta communities, agencies, non-profits and citizens seeking to contribute to
7 regional ecosystem restoration and economic enhancement. There is a great deal
8 of knowledge within Delta communities, governmental and non-governmental
9 organizations, and educational institutions, but it is often difficult to access. The
10 Conservancy will play a leadership role in efforts to gather and communicate this
11 information and knowledge, as well as to identify knowledge gaps that could be
12 filled through targeted research or information-gathering activities. The
13 Conservancy will also be a leader in identifying and supporting practical, effective
14 approaches to adaptive management, including development of institutional
15 frameworks to support information collection, analysis and use for adaptive
16 management restoration projects in the Delta. The adaptive management concept
17 can also be extended to other activities of the Conservancy such as economic
18 enhancement activities.

19 The Conservancy will identify its own information needs, as well as those of the
20 communities it works in, as part of achieving this goal. The Conservancy will
21 base its decisions on best available scientific and technical information as it
22 carries out its mission. The Delta Science Program (DSP) has produced
23 considerable valuable scientific knowledge about the Delta ecosystem. However,
24 there is a need to generate and distribute more knowledge about practical issues
25 in land management, business management, and environmental engineering,
26 which are central to the Conservancy's role in the Delta and have not been a
27 traditional focus of the DSP. The Conservancy will create an Independent
28 Technical Advisory Board (ITAB) that can provide expertise from applied fields
29 relevant to the Conservancy's mission, along with a Delta landowner perspective.
30 The ITAB will help devise and evaluate criteria for Conservancy participation in
31 restoration or economic enhancement projects and appropriate measures and
32 indicators for project performance. The Conservancy will also promote open
33 communication of information and analysis that is accessible to the full range of
34 Delta communities, citizens, and stakeholders.

1 The Conservancy will promote shared understanding within the Delta
2 Restoration Network and across the Delta region, including a focus on interests
3 and joint fact finding, as a way of reducing conflicts and collaboratively pursuing
4 the Conservancy's mission.

5
6 Objective 4.1: Gather and communicate additional technical expertise on matters
7 relevant to the Conservancy's mission

- 8 ○ Strategy 4.1.1: Identify and prioritize scientific and technical issues that
9 are relevant to the Conservancy's mission
- 10 ○ Strategy 4.1.2: Create an ITAB whose members are able to provide
11 independent scientific, local agricultural and economic, public health
12 (vector control), business management, land management, flood
13 protection, and engineering advice to the Conservancy
- 14 ○ Strategy 4.1.3: Consult with the ITAB in the development of criteria for
15 Conservancy participation in restoration or economic enhancement
16 projects and measures and indicators for project performance
- 17 ○ Strategy 4.1.4: Establish and maintain an effective working relationship
18 with the Independent Science Board as an authoritative source for Delta
19 science and encourage their focus on identification of relevant local
20 knowledge and opportunities for its integration into decision making
21 along with more traditional expertise
- 22 ○ Strategy 4.1.5: Support education and dialog about effects of subsidence
23 and sea level rise on Delta agriculture, the Delta ecosystem, and the
24 regional economy based on accurate information

25
26 Objective 4.2: Create an open repository for information and analysis pertinent to
27 the Conservancy's mission

- 28 ○ Strategy 4.2.1: Collaborate with existing state, regional, local, and
29 academic information owners to make relevant information available in a
30 useful format to local communities and citizens

- 1 ○ Strategy 4.2.2: Define an appropriate role for the Conservancy in
2 satisfying needs for a “clearinghouse” for GIS and data management
3 systems pertinent to the Conservancy’s mission
4

5 Objective 4.3: Determine long-term information needs of the Conservancy

- 6 ○ Strategy 4.3.1: Prepare a feasibility study report, including identification
7 of relevant costs and funding sources, that evaluates the internal needs for
8 information systems to house Conservancy-specific information such as
9 land ownership, easements, monitoring data, economic data, and
10 recreational use data
- 11 ○ Strategy 4.3.2: Identify existing and potential regional and community
12 education, shared learning, research, and demonstration projects that the
13 Conservancy can support and enhance
- 14 ○ Strategy 4.3.3: Link information needs to future adaptive management for
15 ecosystem restoration in the Delta including the need for effective
16 institutions and governance structures

17 Objective 4.4: Promote shared understanding of key issues related to agriculture,
18 the Delta economy, and restoration based on accurate information

- 19 ○ Strategy 4.4.1: Apply methods and approaches to discussion and dialog
20 that promote understanding and inquiry in the Delta Restoration
21 Network, the ITAB, economic task forces, and other forums convened or
22 facilitated by the Conservancy
- 23 ○ Strategy 4.4.2: Identify and promote the use of appropriate conflict
24 resolution approaches

1 **Goal 5: Create an effective organization based on**
2 **principles of collaboration, coordination, appropriate**
3 **transparency, and efficient use of resources to fulfill the**
4 **Conservancy's mission and deliver its programs**
5

6 The Conservancy's long-range effectiveness will depend greatly on the level of
7 trust that it develops in the local Delta communities within which it will work. In
8 order to develop this trust, it is critical that the Conservancy's decisions and
9 operations be appropriately open and transparent, so that all interested parties
10 and community members can understand and participate in them.

11 The Conservancy must implement a balanced program that pursues a fair
12 distribution of costs and benefits associated with ecosystem restoration and
13 protection and promotion of economic well-being. Communities and regions
14 around the Delta should identify value from the Conservancy's efforts over the
15 long term.

16 The Conservancy's programs and activities must be efficiently and effectively
17 administered so that precious resources are well spent. Coordination and
18 collaboration with other governmental and non-governmental entities is
19 essential. Many such entities are already engaged in restoration and economic
20 enhancement within the Delta; the Conservancy's activities must complement
21 these existing efforts rather than competing with them.

22 The Conservancy's Interim Strategic Plan identified the creation of an effective
23 organization as a key goal and summarized the activities undertaken during the
24 first year of the Conservancy's existence. The Conservancy hired staff, adopted
25 rules and guidelines for Conservancy operations, and designed an organizational
26 management structure. Since adoption of the Interim Strategic Plan the
27 Conservancy has hired an Executive Director, continued to build staff, and
28 planned for the development of this Strategic Plan as required by its enabling
29 legislation. The Conservancy has established multiple subcommittees and work
30 groups to assist in development of its Strategic Plan; the Strategic Plan and Policy
31 Subcommittee has been actively and regularly engaged in this effort.

32 In 2011, the Conservancy co-hosted, along with the Water Education Foundation,
33 a roundtable to look at the complexity of the issues in the Delta entitled

1 "Changing Our Perspective: New Ways of Thinking About the Delta." The
2 roundtable speakers focused on new perspectives into management options to
3 address these issues. The roundtable was well-received and generated significant
4 follow up discussions.

5 The Conservancy also convened a meeting—the first in 10 years—of all the state
6 conservancies. This meeting provided the opportunity to discuss better
7 coordination for more efficient use of resources, exchange of information, and
8 development of options to address challenges associated with limited funding.

9 The Conservancy sponsored a grant-writing workshop in the Delta to assist Delta
10 advocates in researching and writing private and publically-funded grants. A
11 Delta Grants Coalition is one concrete outcome from the workshop. This group
12 meets bi-monthly to share progress on their efforts to fund projects benefitting
13 the Delta and its residents. In 2012 the Conservancy is planning additional
14 workshops, including one on how to market a business with a limited budget
15 using social media and other low-cost strategies.

16 Current year efforts for the Conservancy staff include establishing and fostering
17 relationships with individual Delta residents and other groups and organizations
18 involved in Delta issues. Among these are county Farm Bureau members, hunting
19 and fishing groups, boating groups, historical societies, land trusts and chambers
20 of commerce. The Conservancy staff also are working with state, federal, and
21 local agencies; state and federal legislators and staff; and environmental
22 organizations interested in ecosystem restoration efforts in the Delta.

23 The Conservancy is coordinating with other state agencies in reviewing and
24 commenting on other Delta planning efforts. These efforts include the Delta Plan,
25 the BDCP, the Delta Protection Commission's ESP, and the CVFPP. In providing
26 these comments, the Conservancy staff also works closely with its Board, through
27 the Strategic Plan and Policy Subcommittee and the Legislative Committee.

28 Policies affecting the Conservancy are typically drafted by staff and reviewed and
29 amended in subcommittee meetings before being considered by the full Board.
30 During its March 2012 meeting the Board considered the climate change and sea
31 level rise policy developed through this process. Other policies the Board likely
32 will consider include a "good neighbor" policy and best management practices for

1 land ownership should the Conservancy own and manage or contract for
2 management of state-owned land in the Delta.

3 Another focus for the Conservancy will be to develop a full grants program,
4 including policies and criteria. Currently, the Conservancy is able to provide
5 technical support to Delta residents looking for grant assistance, primarily
6 through its Current Funding Opportunities web page
7 (http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov/funding/funding_current.html) that
8 provides information about available grant opportunities.

9 The Conservancy partners with non-profit organizations for grants from federal
10 agencies. One such partnership is with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the
11 Water Education Foundation. This grant will bring public outreach funds into the
12 Conservancy for tours, briefings, and workshops focused on key topics in the San
13 Francisco Bay and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Topics include water supply
14 and quality, ecosystem health and restoration, Delta agriculture, climate change
15 impacts specific to the Delta, flood preparedness, and Safe Harbor agreements
16 for local entities.

17 Fully realizing the Conservancy's authorities and meeting its responsibilities will
18 require an effective, lean organization that emphasizes teamwork and flexibility.
19 As funding becomes available the Conservancy should be positioned to make
20 strategic hires to provide the expertise and accountability required for effective
21 program management. Staff and management training needs and staff retention
22 incentives need to be continually assessed and planned into Conservancy
23 budgets. Providing an appropriate working environment will allow staff to fulfill
24 their duties and plan for their own professional development.

25

26 **Objective 5.1: Provide a safe, creative, inspiring, and equitable working**
27 **environment for staff and management.**

- 28 ○ Strategy 5.1.1: Assign a safety coordinator within the Conservancy who
29 plans and conducts safety drills, reviews office space safety concerns,
30 ensures mandatory safety training is up to date, and communicates safety
31 concerns and issues to management
- 32 ○ Strategy 5.1.2: Work with the Department of General Services to ensure
33 workplace security is adequate and assign a workplace ombudsman to

1 listen to staff work place safety issues and bring to management attention
2 as appropriate

- 3 ○ Strategy 5.1.3: Ensure all staff and management receive required training
4 in identification and prevention of discrimination and harassment, review
5 with staff annually the “zero tolerance” policy, and take immediate action
6 to investigate any and all claims of discrimination and harassment

7

8 **Objective 5.2: Develop 5- and 10-year work and staffing plans to fully implement**
9 **the goals and objectives of this Strategic Plan**

- 10 ○ Strategy 5.2.1: Develop work plans to support programs under likely
11 funding scenarios and have these approved by Conservancy Board
- 12 ○ Strategy 5.2.2: Develop staffing plans for the work plans to determine
13 expertise required and percentage of a full-time equivalent person
14 required for implementation under likely funding scenarios. Compare
15 expertise requirements to civil service classifications to determine
16 appropriate hiring strategy

17

18 **Objective 5.3: Assist staff in reaching their full potential**

- 19 ○ Strategy 5.3.1: Establish individual development plans for all staff and
20 review on an annual basis
- 21 ○ Strategy 5.3.2: Budget for appropriate training based on individual
22 development plans
- 23 ○ Strategy 5.3.3: Plan for staff development through interagency
24 assignments, and create leading and mentoring opportunities

25

26 **Objective 5.4: Establish through actions a “Delta Conservancy” way of doing**
27 **business, including the use of performance measures**

- 28 ○ Strategy 5.4.1: Ensure an open and transparent decision-making process
29 by continuing to adopt understandable rules, guidelines, and procedures
30 for the Conservancy’s business

- 1 ○ Strategy 5.4.2: Establish a robust and consistent public outreach and
2 feedback program within the region and in the surrounding metropolitan
3 areas and the state
- 4 ○ Strategy 5.4.3: Develop realistic and understandable measures for the
5 Conservancy's performance and the success of its program, and work with
6 the Conservancy's Board to incorporate performance measures into
7 decision making

8

9 Objective 5.5 Use financial, staff, and Board resources efficiently and effectively

- 10 ○ Strategy 5.5.1: Establish an Ecosystem Restoration Program and an
11 Economic Enhancement Program within the Conservancy to organize
12 outreach activities
- 13 ○ Strategy 5.5.2: Create a Committee for Economic Development and a
14 Committee for Restoration as standing committees of the full Board using
15 an open process. These committees would have significant Delta
16 representation, including landowners, business owners, and residents.
17 The committees would provide guidance to staff and make
18 recommendations to the Board about activities that could be undertaken
19 to advance the goals of the Conservancy. A visual depiction can be found
20 at Appendix A
- 21 ○ Strategy 5.5.3: Maintain an active role in the ongoing development,
22 implementation and updates of the Delta Plan, including the BDCP if it is
23 incorporated into the Delta Plan, to ensure that Conservancy projects and
24 activities are appropriately consistent
- 25 ○ Strategy 5.5.4: Participate efficiently in other planning activities that are
26 relevant to the Conservancy's mission, including state and regional flood
27 management planning efforts, the California Water Plan process, levee
28 maintenance programs and disaster planning activities

29

30

1 Goal 6: Establish a stable, diversified, and self- 2 sustaining funding base for the Conservancy 3

4 The Conservancy was created without a concurrent funding source, but with the
5 clear intention that it would receive funding through a newly created Sacramento
6 – San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Fund. Achieving a stable funding base for
7 operations is therefore a critical goal. The Legislature envisioned the potential
8 for major resources to flow to the Conservancy through passage of a statewide
9 bond measure; the Conservancy must develop a range of reliable funding sources
10 in the event that such a bond measure does not materialize in the next several
11 years. Some of these should be sources that can be sustained in perpetuity, so the
12 Conservancy can embark on long-range restoration activities with confidence.

13 State conservancies have the flexibility to combine funding from a wide variety of
14 sources, including state and federal government programs and agency
15 partnerships, bond funds, fees, revenue-generating partnerships with private
16 enterprises or non-profits, and grants from private foundations. The
17 Conservancy will pursue all of these avenues, based in part on the Conservancy's
18 own Finance Plan now under development.

19 20 Objective 6.1: Establish funding from multiple, diverse state and federal 21 government sources

- 22 ○ Strategy 6.1.1: Develop proposal for license plate fund item devoted to
23 Delta Conservancy programs and projects
- 24 ○ Strategy 6.1.2: Develop proposal for permanent funding line in state
25 general fund
- 26 ○ Strategy 6.1.3: Evaluate development of a separate fund for agriculture
27 and working landscapes within the overall Delta Conservancy Fund
28 established by the Legislature, and assess the long-term viability of
29 available funding sources to ensure continued solvency for the special
30 fund
- 31 ○ Strategy 6.1.4: Work with Department of Finance and the Administration
32 to identify funding needs

- 1 ○ Strategy 6.1.5: Educate local communities on potential benefits of
- 2 Conservancy-related portions of any future bond measures

- 3 ○ Strategy 6.1.6: Match Conservancy projects and activities with funding
- 4 availability from federal and State funding sources available through open
- 5 solicitations

- 6 ○ Strategy 6.1.7: Develop and maintain strategic relationships with other
- 7 key state and federal agencies in the Delta to identify areas of potential
- 8 collaboration and joint funding

- 9 ○ Strategy 6.1.8: Develop mechanisms that allow beneficiaries of the Delta
- 10 Plan to contribute financing to the Conservancy's projects and long-term
- 11 operations and maintenance

- 12 ○ Strategy 6.1.9: Develop grant writing expertise in collaboration with
- 13 potential grant partners

- 14 ○ Strategy 6.1.10 Develop endowment fund to enable acceptance of funding
- 15 from State, local and private sources for long-term monitoring and
- 16 maintenance of restoration sites, including payments in lieu of taxes

17

18 Objective 6.2: Develop private revenue sources

- 19 ○ Strategy 6.2.1: Generate proposals for revenue-generating partnerships
- 20 with private entities

- 21 ○ Strategy 6.2.2: Seek targeted private foundation funding to support self-
- 22 sustaining revenue sources in collaboration with others

23

24 Objective 6.3: Complete the Conservancy's own near-term Delta Regional
25 Finance Plan to guide development of a funding base

- 26 ○ Strategy 6.3.1: Create a process for the Conservancy Board to guide the
- 27 direction of the Finance Plan

- 28 ○ Strategy 6.3.2: Communicate the findings and priorities of the Finance
- 29 Plan to the public, partners and decision makers at all levels

30

VII. Implementing the Strategic Plan

This initial Strategic Plan is intended to support decision-making in an uncertain future. The near-term context for the Conservancy—the next two to three years—will be shaped both by funding opportunities and by the evolution of the regional planning context described in Section III. The Conservancy’s role in Delta ecosystem restoration activities potentially will be influenced by multiple plans now in various stages of development or implementation.

These plans and their potential significance have been discussed in earlier sections of this document. Regardless of their content, however, these plans are unlikely to fully account for all potentially useful restoration actions that the Conservancy may wish to undertake. Moreover, actions proposed under one or more of these plans may not meet the criteria for participation that the Conservancy will establish as it implements this Strategic Plan. Some of these criteria, such as balance, multiple benefits, and mitigation of impacts, are discussed in Section V above. With this important caveat, the presence or absence of specific restoration frameworks and targets, and associated funding and agency motivation for Delta restoration actions, will likely be significant factors that affect the Conservancy’s implementation of this Strategic Plan.

Given this uncertain and dynamic context it is useful to think of implementation in stages. The Delta Conservancy lacks sufficient funding to realize all of the goals and objectives identified in this Strategic Plan and will commit existing resources based on priorities discussed above. That said, many of the strategies described herein are intended to be useful even with current funding levels. This low-funding status is Stage 1 of the Conservancy’s evolution. At some point in the future the Conservancy will secure stable and sufficient funding sources to meet all of its goals and objectives; this will be Stage 2. Achievement of the funding objectives identified in Goal 6 is essential to moving the Conservancy from Stage 1 to Stage 2.

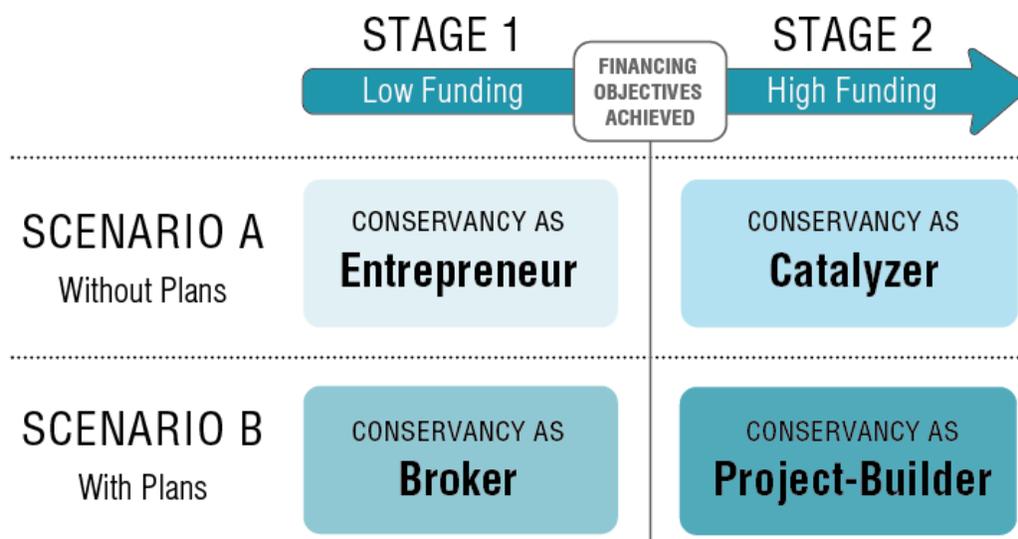
There are two possible scenarios in Stages 1 and 2: a “without plans” scenario (called Scenario A) that assumes the BDCP, in particular, is not completed and incorporated into the Delta Plan, and a “with plans” scenario (called Scenario B)

1 that assumes the Delta Plan, BDCP and other important regional plans are
 2 completed, adopted, and become enforceable. These different combinations
 3 point to four general roles for the Conservancy over the next two to five years:

- 4 • Stage 1 (low funding), Scenario A (no plans): “Conservancy as
 5 entrepreneur”—*current status*
- 6 • Stage 1 (low funding), Scenario B (with plans): “Conservancy as broker”
- 7 • Stage 2 (high funding), Scenario A: “Conservancy as catalyzer”
- 8 • Stage 2 (high funding), Scenario B: “Conservancy as project-builder”

9 These scenarios are described in greater detail below. The specific strategies
 10 mentioned within these descriptions are for illustrative purposes only, and their
 11 inclusion is not meant to imply the exclusion or diminishment of other potential
 12 strategies described in this Strategic Plan. An illustration of the relationship of
 13 these scenarios is included as Figure 3.

14
 15 **Figure 3: Four Potential Roles of the Delta Conservancy**



16

17

1 **Stage 1 (low funding), Scenario A (no plans): “Conservancy as**
2 **entrepreneur”**

3 This is the Conservancy’s current status. Under these conditions, the
4 Conservancy will focus on achieving the financing objectives identified under
5 Goal 6 as well as initiating several key strategies to inaugurate program-related
6 activities and collaborations with existing staff and funding resources. These
7 should include high-leverage convening functions, such as the creation of the
8 Delta Restoration Network (Strategy 3.1.1) to develop a voluntary framework for
9 coordination of restoration activities in the Delta, and the creation of one or more
10 economic enhancement task forces (Strategy 2.1.2) to identify specific and viable
11 economic development projects for implementation, all with participation of local
12 landowners and agricultural interests.

13 In the absence of both stable funding and the planning impetus for agency- and
14 stakeholder-sponsored restoration activities, the Conservancy will take a
15 leadership role in both defining what needs to be done and how to do it. This
16 may involve working with Delta Restoration Network participants to develop
17 criteria for prioritization and integration of large-scale ecosystem restoration in
18 the Delta (Strategy 3.1.3), and identifying specific elements of the Delta
19 Protection Commission’s ESP to incorporate into the Conservancy’s Economic
20 Development Program (Strategy 2.1.1).

21 In this context implementation (and organizational development) will need to
22 proceed on a project-by-project basis. Defining specific activities that deliver
23 tangible results individually and build on one another over time will be
24 important. The Conservancy will retain wide latitude to strategize and
25 implement economic enhancement activities provided these can be financed.
26 The Conservancy will place more emphasis on developing additional sources of
27 funding for such activities, potentially including partnerships with private
28 entities or other innovative mechanisms.

29 **Stage 1 (low funding), Scenario B (with plans): “Conservancy as**
30 **broker”**

31 In this scenario the Delta Plan and BDCP would be in effect and would create a
32 situation in which, over time, large amounts of restoration occur in the Delta
33 under the financial sponsorship of other entities. While the Conservancy would

1 still pursue its objective of defining its own restoration criteria while respecting
2 those established by other restoration agencies and programs, the relative
3 emphasis on strategies in this plan might change. For example, identifying
4 mechanisms to resolve conflicts between Delta Plan restoration policies and local
5 HCPs (Strategy 3.1.2) and establishing written criteria for Conservancy
6 participation in Delta ecosystem restoration projects (Strategy 3.3.1) would be
7 relatively more important in this scenario. Restoration activities resulting from
8 project mitigation (Strategy 3.3.2), as opposed to sponsorship by bond funds or
9 other direct funding sources, would become a relatively more important part of
10 the Conservancy's portfolio.

11 As in the previous scenario, the Conservancy would retain wide latitude to
12 strategize and implement economic enhancement activities, provided that they
13 can be financed.

14 **Stage 2 (high funding), Scenario A (no plans): “Conservancy as**
15 **catalyzer”**

16 If the Conservancy proceeds to a well-funded Stage 2 without the regional plans
17 coming into effect, it will have both the opportunity and the responsibility to
18 implement restoration without a binding restoration plan from the BDCP. At the
19 same time, the absence of a BDCP and/or Delta Plan would limit the regulatory
20 impetus for other agencies and stakeholders to sponsor restoration projects in
21 the Delta. The Conservancy would take on a relatively larger leadership role in
22 defining restoration objectives for the Delta, providing or locating the funding
23 resources, and crafting the appropriate institutional relationships to achieve
24 those objectives.

25 In this scenario the Conservancy would support and facilitate the Delta
26 Restoration Network in the creation of a Delta restoration framework and a
27 voluntary agreement on the role of various agency and non-profit partners in the
28 implementation of that framework (Strategy 3.1.1). The Conservancy would also
29 place a relatively higher emphasis on activities such as the development of land
30 suitability criteria for restoration (Strategy 3.3.3).

1 **Stage 2 (high funding), Scenario B (with plans): “Conservancy as**
2 **project-builder”**

3 In a resource-rich Stage 2 where the principal regional plans take effect, the
4 Conservancy would undertake a wide variety of actions throughout the Delta in
5 pursuit of its mission consistent with planning rules formulated by other
6 agencies.

7 Restoration activities would be given a strong impetus by an enforceable Delta
8 Plan and BDCP, potentially creating a central role for the Conservancy in
9 implementation. These regional planning drivers would create a scenario in
10 which certain actions that the Conservancy might take in the Delta landscape
11 potentially would be subject to a consistency determination by the Delta
12 Stewardship Council, review and comment by the Delta Protection Commission,
13 or both. This scenario applies both to ecosystem restoration and economic
14 enhancement.

15 In this scenario, the Conservancy would devote relatively more energy to
16 designing the institutional, contracting, and project management mechanisms
17 necessary to meet any relevant planning requirements, and to ensuring the long-
18 term success of restoration actions. Strategies such as developing financial and
19 ecological models for projects (Strategy 3.3.5), improving visitor accessibility to
20 the Delta (Strategy 2.1.2), development of Safe Harbor agreements (Strategy
21 3.6.3) and completion of a feasibility study of farmland mitigation mechanisms to
22 be undertaken by lead restoration agencies (Strategy 2.2.1), would take on added
23 importance in this scenario.

24 In both Stage 2 scenarios all strategies in this Strategic Plan would potentially be
25 pursued. This plan anticipates and expects that the Conservancy, through
26 successful execution of its Goal 6 objectives and strategies on financing, would
27 reach Stage 2 and possess the funding resources necessary to achieve its strategic
28 goals and make its vision a reality.

29

30

31

1 VIII. Next Steps

2 Adoption of this Strategic Plan by the Board satisfies the Legislature’s direction
3 and marks another milestone for the Conservancy since it was formally
4 established in February 2010. The Plan establishes a useful framework for future
5 decisions and activities intended to maintain and increase progress in achieving
6 the Conservancy’s mission. The Conservancy will continue working
7 collaboratively and in coordination with the many citizens, landowners, and
8 government agencies engaged in protecting the Delta’s ecosystem and enhancing
9 its economy.

10 This Strategic Plan is intended to serve as a flexible working document for the
11 Board and Conservancy staff. The Board expects to review and update this plan
12 no more than five years from its of adoption; the timing of that review will
13 depend on the factors described above. The Board’s review process will be open
14 and, as with this first Strategic Plan, will include a significant opportunity for
15 input from a wide range of stakeholders.

16

17

1 Acknowledgements

2 The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy is deeply appreciative of the
3 many individuals, organizations, and government agencies that played a role in
4 the development of this plan. The input and support was invaluable. In
5 particular, the Conservancy would like to acknowledge:

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7 plan. The subcommittee members are: Mike Eaton, chair; Steve Chappell, Suisun
8 Resource Conservation District; Darla Guenzler, California Council of Land
9 Trusts; Robin Kulakow, Yolo Basin Foundation; Jim Provenza, Yolo County
10 Supervisor; Ken Vogel, San Joaquin County Supervisor; and Mark Wilson,
11 Liaison Advisor.

12 Many people generously agreed to participate in interviews as part of the
13 development of this plan, including those individuals identified in Appendix D.

14 The Conservancy also acknowledges the support and help of Dean Messer, Dale
15 Hoffman-Floerke, and Mark Cowin of the California Department of Water
16 Resources; Cindy Messer, former Assistant Executive Officer of the Delta
17 Conservancy; and the many Conservancy volunteers, including Karen and Wally
18 Coffee and Irene Chung.

19

1 Glossary

2 **Adaptive management:** a framework and flexible decision-making process of
3 ongoing knowledge acquisition, monitoring, and evaluation leading to continuous
4 improvement in management planning and project implementation to achieve
5 specified objectives.

6 **Balanced program:** a fair distribution of costs and benefits across the
7 Conservancy's co-equal responsibilities and the geographic distribution of its
8 projects.

9 **Conservancy:** 1) a body concerned with the preservation of nature, specific
10 species, or natural resources including agriculture, e.g., the Sacramento-San
11 Joaquin Delta Conservancy; 2) the conservation of something, especially wildlife
12 and the environment, in particular: preservation, protection, or restoration of the
13 natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife; preservation,
14 repair, and prevention of deterioration if archaeological, historical, and cultural
15 sites and artifacts; and prevention of excessive or wasteful use of a resource.

16 **Delta:** The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, as defined in Water Code Section
17 12220, the Suisun Marsh, and the Yolo Bypass.

18 **Delta Legacy Community:** A handful of selected Delta towns that have high
19 cultural, historic, or ambiance value that give the Delta a distinctive sense of
20 place. Examples are Clarksburg, Courtland, Isleton, Locke, Ryde, and Walnut
21 Grove.²²

22 **Delta Restoration Network:** A voluntary, collaborative forum of Delta
23 restoration agencies, other stakeholders, and Delta landowners and citizens that
24 will be convened, facilitated, and supported by the Delta Conservancy. Network
25 participants will share information and jointly develop a comprehensive
26 restoration framework to promote coordination of restoration activities, among
27 other activities.

28 **Delta Science Program:** The Delta Science Program was established as part of
29 the Delta Stewardship Council to develop scientific information and synthesis for
30 the state of scientific knowledge on issues critical for managing the Bay-Delta

²² Tracks definition in the Delta Protection Commission's ESP, p. 14.

1 system. That body of knowledge must be unbiased, relevant, authoritative,
2 integrated across state and federal agencies, and communicated to Bay-Delta
3 decision-makers, agency managers, stakeholders, the scientific community, and
4 the public. The Lead Scientist is responsible for leading, overseeing, and guiding
5 the Science Program.

6 **Flood Protection:** Structural and nonstructural methods of mitigating,
7 avoiding, or reducing flooding hazards or risks.

8 **Good Neighbor Policies:** Policies to avoid negative impacts on agricultural
9 land as a result of habitat enhancements. The goals of these policies are to assist
10 in avoiding negative impacts, addressing and resolving unavoidable impacts, and
11 fostering good communication and relationships among neighbors and
12 communities. These policies may also include establishing Safe Harbor
13 agreements that, among other things, limit liability for incidental take associated
14 with agricultural and recreational activities adjacent to wildlife lands.

15 **Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs):** Planning documents required by the
16 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for an incidental take permit under the federal
17 Endangered Species Act. Incidental take permits are required if a proposed
18 activity would result in the death of or injury (“incidental take”) to a listed
19 wildlife species. HCPs describe the anticipated effects of the proposed taking,
20 how those impacts will be minimized or mitigated, and how the HCP is to be
21 funded.

22 **Independent Science Board (ISB):** The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta
23 Reform Act of 2009 (Delta Reform Act) establishes the Delta ISB, whose
24 members are to be appointed by the Delta Stewardship Council, which was also
25 created by the Delta Reform Act as an independent agency of the State of
26 California. The current Delta ISB members were appointed by the Council on
27 May 27, 2010 for five-year terms. The Council developed and approved a Charge
28 to the Delta ISB on August 26, 2010. The Delta ISB replaces the previous
29 CALFED Independent Science Board.

30 **Independent Technical Advisory Board (ITAB):** The ITAB is intended
31 support the Conservancy’s mission by ensuring that local technical knowledge is
32 part of decision making about programs, policies, and projects. The ITAB will be

1 a complement to scientific and technical forums such as the Independent Science
2 Board and the Delta Stewardship Council's Science Program.

3 **Natural Community Conservation Plans (NCCPs):** NCCPs identify and
4 provide for the regional or area-wide protection of plants, animals, and their
5 habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity. The
6 primary objective of the NCCP is to conserve natural communities at the
7 ecosystem level while accommodating compatible land use.

8 **Pacific Flyway:** A major north-south route of travel for migratory birds in the
9 Americas, extending from Alaska to Patagonia. Every year, migratory birds travel
10 some or all of this distance both in spring and in fall, following food sources,
11 heading to breeding grounds, or travelling to overwintering sites. The Delta,
12 Suisun Marsh, and Yolo Bypass are part of the Pacific Flyway.

13 **Suisun Marsh:** The largest brackish marsh on the west coast of the United
14 States. The marsh is immediately west of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and
15 is also a part of the San Francisco Bay estuary. It includes 116,000 acres of bays,
16 sloughs, tidal marsh, diked-managed wetlands, seasonal marshes, lowland
17 grasslands, upland grasslands, and cultivated lands.

18 **Sustainability:** the capacity to endure; in this document,
19 sustainable/sustainability refers to plans or actions that help to meet the needs of
20 the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their
21 own needs.

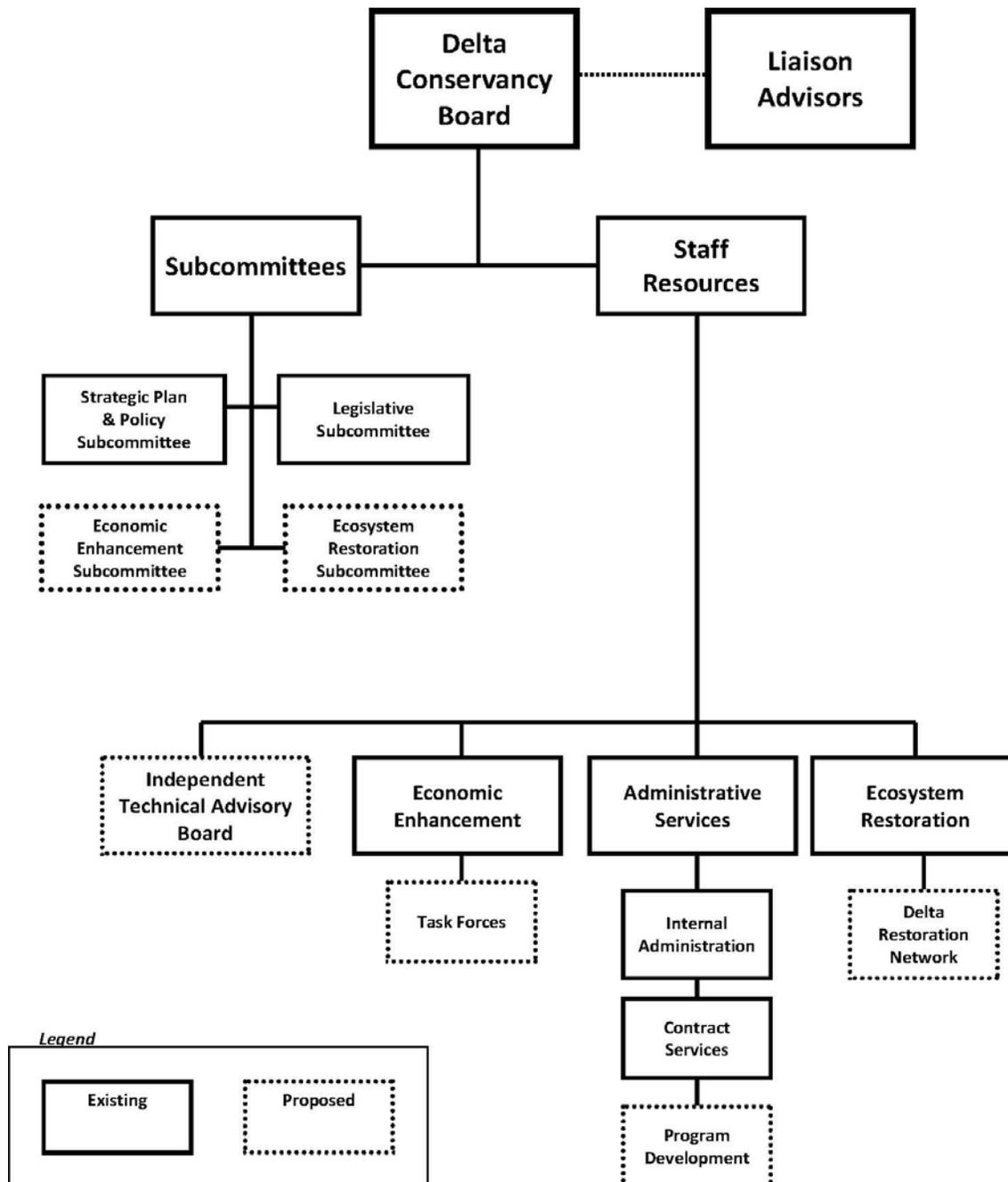
22 **Sustainable agriculture:** A sustainable agriculture is one that, over the long
23 term, enhances environmental quality and the resource base on which agriculture
24 depends; provides for basic human food and fiber needs; is economically viable,
25 and enhances the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

26 **Working Landscapes:** The working landscape is defined as an economically
27 and ecologically vital and sustainable landscape where agricultural and other
28 natural resource-based producers generate multiple public benefits while
29 providing for their own, and their communities', economic and social well-being.

30

1 Appendix A:

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Organizational Chart



Appendix B:

1 Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act

2 Chapter 1. General Provisions

3 Public Resources Code, Section 32300. This division shall be known, and may
4 be cited, as the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act.

5 32301. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

6 (a) The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is a unique natural resource of local,
7 state, and national significance.

8 (b) At 1,300 square miles, the Delta is the largest estuary on the west
9 coast of North and South America.

10 (c) Its rivers and labyrinths of sloughs and channels are home to 750
11 species of plants and wildlife as well as 55 species of fish, provide habitat for
12 700 native plant and animal species, and are part of the Pacific Flyway.

13 (d) The Delta contains more than 500,000 acres of agricultural land, with
14 unique soils, and farmers who are creative and utilize innovative agriculture, such
15 as carbon sequestration crops, subsidence reversal crops, wildlife-friendly crops,
16 and crops direct for marketing to the large urban populations nearby.

17 (e) The Delta and Suisun Marsh provide numerous opportunities for
18 recreation, such as boating, kayaking, fishing, hiking, birding, and hunting.
19 Navigable waterways in the Delta are available for public access and currently
20 make up the majority of recreational opportunities. There is a need for land-
21 based recreational access points including parks, picnic areas, and campgrounds.

22 (f) The Delta's history is rich with a distinct natural, agricultural, and
23 cultural heritage. It is home to the community of Locke, the only town in
24 the United States built primarily by early Chinese immigrants. Other
25 legacy communities include Bethel Island, Clarksburg, Courtland,

1 Freeport, Hood, Isleton, Knightsen, Rio Vista, Ryde, and Walnut Grove.

2 (g) The Delta is home to more than 500,000 people and 200,000 jobs, and
3 contributes over thirty-five billion dollars (\$35,000,000,000) to the state's
4 economy.

5 (h) In addition, the Delta provides water to more than 25 million
6 Californians and three million acres of agricultural land. It supports a four
7 hundred billion dollar (\$400,000,000,000) economy and is traversed by energy,
8 communications, and transportation facilities vital to the economic health of
9 California.

10 (i) A Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy can support efforts
11 that advance both environmental protection and the economic well-being
12 of Delta residents in a complementary manner, including all of the following:

13 (1) Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration.

14 (2) Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes.

15 (3) Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation.

16 (4) Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the

17 Delta in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.

18 (5) Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such
19 as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection
20 Commission.

21 (6) Protect and improve water quality.

22 (7) Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the
23 conservancy's program.

24 (8) Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed.

25 (9) Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural,
26 cultural, historical, and living resources.

1 (10) Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat
2 conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans
3 (NCCPs).

4 (11) Facilitate take protection and safe harbor agreements under the
5 federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et seq.) and the
6 California Endangered Species Act (Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 2050)
7 of Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code) for adjacent landowners and local
8 public agencies.

9 (12) Promote environmental education.

10 Chapter 2. Definitions

11 32310. For the purposes of this division, the following terms have the
12 following meanings:

13 (a) “Board” means the governing board of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta
14 Conservancy.

15 (b) “Conservancy” means the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta
16 Conservancy.

17 (c) “Delta” means the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta as defined in Section
18 12220 of the Water Code.

19 (d) “Fund” means the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Fund
20 created pursuant to Section 32360.

21 (e) “Local public agency” means a city, county, special district, or joint powers
22 authority.

23 (f) “Nonprofit organization” means a private, nonprofit organization that
24 qualifies for exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United
25 States Code and that has among its principal charitable purposes preservation of
26 land for scientific, recreational, scenic, or open-space opportunities, protection of
27 the natural environment, preservation or enhancement of wildlife, preservation

1 of cultural and historical resources, or efforts to provide for the enjoyment of
2 public lands.

3 (g) “Suisun Marsh” means the area defined in Section 29101 and protected by
4 Division 19 (commencing with Section 29000).

5 Chapter 3. Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

6 32320. There is in the Natural Resources Agency the Sacramento-San
7 Joaquin Delta Conservancy, which is created as a state agency to work in
8 collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested parties.

9 32322. (a) The conservancy shall act as a primary state agency to
10 implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta.

11 (b) The conservancy shall support efforts that advance environmental
12 protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents, including all of the
13 following:

14 (1) Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration.

15 (2) Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes.

16 (3) Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation in the Delta.

17 (4) Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta, in
18 coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.

19 (5) Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such
20 as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection
21 Commission.

22 (6) Protect and improve water quality.

23 (7) Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the
24 conservancy’s program.

25 (8) Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed.

26 (9) Protect, conserve, and restore the region’s physical, agricultural,

1 cultural, historical, and living resources.

2 (10) Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat
3 conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans
4 (NCCPs).

5 (11) Facilitate take protection and safe harbor agreements under the
6 federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. Sec. 1531 et seq.), the
7 California Endangered Species Act (Chapter 1.5 (commencing with Section 2050)
8 of Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code), and the Natural Community
9 Conservation Planning Act (Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 2800) of
10 Division 3 of the Fish and Game Code) for adjacent landowners and local public
11 agencies.

12 (12) Promote environmental education through grant funding.

13 (c) When implementing subdivision (b), the conservancy shall under-take
14 efforts to enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

15 Chapter 4. Governing Board

16 32330. The board shall consist of 11 voting members and two nonvoting
17 members, appointed or designated as follows:

18 The 11 voting members of the board shall consist of all of the following:

19 (1) The Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency, or his or her designee.

20 (2) The Director of Finance, or his or her designee.

21 (3) One member of the board or a designee who is appointed by the
22 Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, who is a resident of that county.

23 (4) One member of the board or a designee who is appointed by the
24 Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, who is a resident of that county.

25 (5) One member of the board or a designee who is appointed by the San
26 Joaquin County Board of Supervisors, who is a resident of that county.

1 (6) One member of the board or a designee who is appointed by the
2 Solano County Board of Supervisors, who is a resident of that county.

3 (7) One member of the board or a designee who is appointed by the Yolo
4 County Board of Supervisors, who is a resident of that county.

5 (8) Two public members appointed by the Governor, subject to
6 confirmation by the Senate.

7 (9) One public member appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.

8 (10) One public member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

9 (b) The two nonvoting members shall consist of a Member of the Senate,
10 appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, and a Member of the Assembly,
11 appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly. The members appointed under this
12 subdivision shall meet with the conservancy and participate in its activities to the
13 extent that this participation is not incompatible with their positions as Members
14 of the Legislature. The

15 appointed members shall represent a district that encompasses a portion of
16 the Delta.

17 (c) Ten liaison advisers who shall serve in an advisory, nonvoting capacity
18 shall consist of all of the following:

19 (1) One representative of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service,
20 designated by the United States Secretary of the Interior.

21 (2) One representative of the United States National Marine Fisheries
22 Service, designated by the United States Secretary of the Interior.

23 (3) One representative of the United States Bureau of Reclamation,
24 designated by the United States Secretary of the Interior.

25 (4) One representative of the United States Army Corps of Engineers,
26 designated by the Commanding Officer, United States Army Corps of

1 Engineers, South Pacific Division.

2 (5) A designee of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development
3 Commission for coordination purposes.

4 (6) A designee of the State Coastal Conservancy for coordination
5 purposes.

6 (7) A designee of the Suisun Resource Conservation District for
7 coordination purposes.

8 (8) A designee of the Central Valley Flood Protection Board.

9 (9) A designee of the Yolo Basin Foundation.

10 (10) A designee of the Delta Protection Commission.

11 (d) The public members appointed by the Governor shall serve for a term of
12 four years, with a two-term limit.

13 (e) The locally appointed members and alternates shall serve at the
14 pleasure of the appointing board of supervisors.

15 (f) The public members appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules or the
16 Speaker of the Assembly shall serve for a term of four years, with a two-term
17 limit.

18 (g) The Members of the Senate and Assembly shall serve at the pleasure of the
19 appointing body.

20 (h) Alternates may be appointed by the county boards of supervisors.

21 32332. Annually, the voting members of the board shall elect from
22 among the voting members a chairperson and vice chairperson, and other
23 officers as necessary. If the office of the chairperson or vice chairperson

24 becomes vacant, a new chairperson or vice chairperson shall be elected by the
25 voting members of the board to serve for the remainder of the term. The

1 chairperson shall be selected from among the members specified in paragraphs
2 (3) to (7), inclusive, of subdivision (a) of Section 32330.

3 32334. A majority of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for the
4 transaction of the business of the conservancy. The board shall not transact the
5 business of the conservancy if a quorum is not present at the time a vote is taken.
6 A decision of the board requires an affirmative vote of six of the voting
7 membership, and the vote is binding with respect to all matters acted on by the
8 conservancy.

9 32336. The board shall adopt rules and procedures for the conduct of
10 business by the conservancy.

11 32338. The board may establish advisory boards or committees, hold
12 community meetings, and engage in public outreach.

13 32340. The board shall establish and maintain a headquarters office
14 within the Delta. The conservancy may rent or own real and personal
15 property and equipment pursuant to applicable statutes and regulations.

16 32342. The board shall determine the qualifications of, and shall appoint, an
17 executive officer of the conservancy, who shall be exempt from civil service. The
18 board shall employ other staff as necessary to execute the powers and functions
19 provided for in this division.

20 32344. The board may enter into contracts with private entities and
21 public agencies to procure consulting and other services necessary to achieve
22 the purposes of this division.

23 32346. The conservancy's expenses for support and administration may be
24 paid from the conservancy's operating budget and any other funding sources
25 available to the conservancy.

26 32348. The board shall conduct business in accordance with the Bagley-
27 Keene Open Meeting Act (Article 9 (commencing with Section 11120) of Chapter 1
28 of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code).

1 32350. The board shall hold its regular meetings within the Delta or the City
2 of Rio Vista.

3 Chapter 5. Powers, Duties, and Limitations

4 32360. (a) Except as specified in Section 32360.5, the jurisdiction and
5 activities of the conservancy are limited to the Delta and Suisun Marsh.

6 (b) (1) The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Fund is hereby
7 created in the State Treasury. Moneys in the fund shall be available, upon
8 appropriation by the Legislature, only for the purposes of this division.

9 (2) Funds provided for ecosystem restoration and enhancement shall be
10 available for ecosystem restoration projects consistent with the conservancy's
11 strategic plan adopted pursuant to Section 32376.

12 (3) Funds may be allocated to a separate program within the conservancy for
13 economic sustainability in the Delta. The economic sustainability plan adopted
14 pursuant to Section 29759 shall be the basis for the program. Funds provided to
15 the conservancy to implement ecosystem restoration projects pursuant to the Bay
16 Delta Conservation Plan shall only be used for ecosystem restoration purposes.

17 32360.5. In furtherance of the conservancy's role in implementing the
18 Delta Plan, the conservancy may take or fund an action outside the Delta
19 and Suisun Marsh if the board makes all of the following findings:

20 (a) The project implements the ecosystem goals of the Delta Plan.

21 (b) The project is consistent with the requirements of any applicable state and
22 federal permits.

23 (c) The conservancy has given notice to and reviewed any comments
24 received from affected local jurisdictions and the Delta Protection
25 Commission.

26 (d) The conservancy has given notice to and reviewed any comments
27 received from any state conservancy where the project is located.

1 (e) The project will provide significant benefits to the Delta.

2 32362. The conservancy may engage in partnerships with nonprofit
3 organizations, local public agencies, and landowners.

4 32363. In implementing this division, the conservancy shall cooperate
5 and consult with the city or county in which a grant is proposed to be

6 expended or an interest in real property is proposed to be acquired, and shall,
7 as necessary or appropriate, coordinate its efforts with other state agencies, in
8 cooperation with the Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency. The conservancy
9 shall, as necessary or appropriate, cooperate and consult with a public water
10 system, levee, flood control, or drainage agency that owns or operates facilities,
11 including lands appurtenant

12 thereto, where a grant is proposed to be expended or an interest in land is
13 proposed to be acquired.

14 32364. (a) The conservancy may require a grantee to enter into an
15 agreement with the conservancy on terms and conditions specified by the
16 conservancy.

17 (b) The conservancy may require a cost-share or local funding
18 requirement for a grant. The conservancy may make that cost-share or local
19 funding requirement contingent upon the total amount of funding available, the
20 fiscal resources of the applicant, or urgency of the project. The conservancy may
21 waive cost-share requirements.

22 (c) The conservancy may fund or award grants for plans and feasibility
23 studies consistent with its strategic plan or the Delta Plan.

24 (d) The conservancy may seek repayment or reimbursement of funds
25 granted on terms and conditions it deems appropriate. The proceeds of
26 repayment shall be deposited in the fund.

27 (e) The conservancy may require any funds that exceed the costs of

1 eligible or approved projects or of acquisition to be returned to the
2 conservancy, to be available for expenditure when appropriated by the
3 Legislature.

4 32364.5. (a) The conservancy may provide grants and loans to state
5 agencies, local public agencies, and nonprofit organizations to further the
6 goals of the conservancy.

7 (b) An entity applying for a grant from the conservancy to acquire an
8 interest in real property shall specify all of the following in the grant
9 application:

10 (1) The intended use of the property.

11 (2) The manner in which the land will be managed.

12 (3) How the cost of ongoing operations, maintenance, and management will
13 be provided, including an analysis of the maintaining
14 entity's financial capacity to support those ongoing costs.

15 (4) Grantees shall demonstrate, where applicable, how they will provide
16 payments in lieu of taxes, assessments, or charges otherwise due to local
17 government.

18 32365. The conservancy may sue and be sued.

19 32366. (a) The conservancy may acquire from willing sellers or
20 transferors interests in real property and improve, lease, or transfer interests
21 in real property, in order to carry out the purposes of this division.

22 (b) The conservancy shall use conservation easements to accomplish
23 ecosystem restoration whenever feasible.

24 32368. The conservancy may enter into an agreement with a public
25 agency, nonprofit organization, or private entity for the construction,

1 management, or maintenance of facilities authorized by the conservancy.

2 32370. The conservancy shall not exercise the power of eminent domain.

3 32372. (a) The conservancy may pursue and accept funds from various
4 sources, including, but not limited to, federal, state, and local funds or grants,
5 gifts, donations, bequests, devises, subventions, grants, rents, royalties, or other
6 assistance and funds from public and private sources.

7 (b) The conservancy may accept fees levied by others.

8 (c) The conservancy may create and manage endowments.

9 (d) All funds received by the conservancy shall be deposited in the fund for
10 expenditure for the purposes of this division.

11 32376. Within two years of hiring an executive officer, the board shall prepare
12 and adopt a strategic plan to achieve the goals of the conservancy. The plan shall
13 describe its interaction with local, regional, state, and federal land use,
14 recreation, water and flood management, and habitat conservation and
15 protection efforts within and adjacent to the Delta. The strategic plan shall
16 establish priorities and criteria for projects and programs, based upon an
17 assessment of program requirements, institutional capabilities, and funding
18 needs throughout the Delta. The strategic plan shall be consistent with the Delta
19 Plan, the Delta Protection Commission's resources management plan, the Central
20 Valley Flood Protection Plan, the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977
21 (Division 19 (commencing with Section 29000)), and the Habitat Management,
22 Preservation and Restoration Plan for the Suisun Marsh.

23 32378. (a) The conservancy may expend funds and award grants and
24 loans to facilitate collaborative planning efforts and to develop projects and
25 programs that are designed to further the purposes of this division.

26 (b) The conservancy may provide and make available technical information,
27 expertise, and other nonfinancial assistance to public

28 agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tribal organizations, to support
29 program and project development and implementation.

30 32380. The conservancy may acquire water or water rights to support

1 the goals of the conservancy.

2 **32381. This division does not grant to the conservancy any of the**

3 **following:**

4 **(a) The power of a city or county to regulate land use.**

5 **(b) The power to regulate any activities on land, except as the owner of an**
6 **interest in the land, or pursuant to an agreement with, or a license or grant of**
7 **management authority from, the owner of an interest in the land.**

8 **(c) The power over water rights held by others.**

9

1 Appendix C:

Delta Conservancy Climate Change Policy

2 **RESOLUTION**

3
4 WHEREAS Governor's Executive Order S-13-08 directed state agencies to consider a
5 range of sea level rise scenarios for 2050 and 2100 to assess project vulnerability,
6 reduce expected risks, and increase resiliency to sea level rise; and

7
8 WHEREAS the 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy called for all state
9 agencies that are responsible for managing and regulating public health,
10 infrastructure, or habitat that is subject to significant climate change to prepare
11 agency-specific adaptation plans, guidance, or criteria; and

12
13 WHEREAS climate change in California during the next century is expected to shift
14 precipitation patterns, accelerate sea level rise, and increase temperatures, thereby
15 posing a serious threat to: California's economy; the health and welfare of its
16 population; and its natural resources; and

17
18 WHEREAS Assembly Bill 32 requires the State of California to reduce its greenhouse
19 gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and Executive Order S-3-05 requires the State
20 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.

21
22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that it is the policy of the Sacramento-San
23 Joaquin Delta Conservancy (Conservancy) to follow established state law and
24 regulations regarding planning for climate change and reducing greenhouse gas
25 emissions by developing a set of guidelines to assist the Conservancy in developing,
26 establishing, and supporting projects that mitigate for climate change by reducing
27 greenhouse gas emissions or have the capacity, or can increase the system's capacity,
28 to adapt to the effects of climate change.

29 30 **CLIMATE CHANGE GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSERVANCY**

31
32 The Conservancy is a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the
33 Delta in collaboration and cooperation with local governments and a wide range of
34 interested parties. The Conservancy Board of Directors developed the following
35 climate change guidelines to assist it in determining what could increase the Delta's
36 resiliency to the effects of climate change within the context of the co-equal
37 responsibilities of advancing environmental protection and the economic well being
38 of Delta residents. Actions related to adapting to the effects of climate will be
39 evaluated with the goal of promoting agriculture as a key industry in the Delta.

40
41 The Conservancy believes the regional economic and environmental health are linked
42 to the Delta's vulnerability to potential climate change impacts, such as increased
43 intensity of flooding or severity of drought, and that strengthening the Delta region's
44 economy will help the Delta adapt to potential future conditions resulting from
45 climate change.

1
2 The Conservancy is committed to establishing and maintaining partnerships with
3 federal, state, and local governments, private business- and land-owners, and
4 non-governmental organizations to develop and implement mitigation and
5 adaptation strategies that address the needs and ability of the Conservancy to meet
6 its mandates over time.
7

8 The Conservancy encourages projects that are resilient to climate change impacts.
9 Such projects may be full-scale, pilot, or demonstration projects. Preferences will be
10 given to projects containing effective or innovative adaptation measures and
11 strategies that would minimize the effects of climate change. All projects should be
12 consistent with state law and the Conservancy's enabling legislation and strategic
13 plan.
14

15 The Conservancy understands that there are dissenting views on climate change and
16 future climatic conditions are unknown. In the face of this uncertainty, the
17 Conservancy will recognize the consensus of the scientific community and use the
18 best available science in identifying climate change risks, adaptation strategies, and
19 mitigation opportunities. The Conservancy understands that data continue to be
20 collected and that knowledge about climate change is evolving; therefore, the
21 Conservancy's Climate Change Guidelines will be updated periodically to integrate
22 relevant new information and data.
23

24 ***Carbon Management***

25

26 The Conservancy sees carbon management as an integrated approach to reducing
27 greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts in the Delta, using a variety of
28 strategies, such as those listed below, but not limited to:
29

- 30 1. Climate Change Research. When appropriate and consistent with the
31 Conservancy's enabling legislation, the Conservancy may support research
32 projects targeted to increasing understanding of climate change impacts to
33 the Delta (e.g. agricultural, economic, environmental), quantify carbon
34 sequestration benefits of habitat enhancement and restoration projects,
35 promote agricultural practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and
36 support projects that demonstrate the effectiveness of adaptive
37 management strategies.
- 38 2. Education, Outreach and Guidance. The Conservancy will collaborate with
39 others to provide up- to-date information and guidance on the latest
40 climate change information pertinent to the Delta and best management
41 practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The Conservancy may
42 collaborate with others to look for economic development opportunities in
43 the Delta that result in reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- 44 3. Reduction/Avoidance. Conservancy staff will work with applicants to
45 identify, evaluate, and incorporate reasonable measures to reduce or avoid
46 the greenhouse gas emissions of Conservancy-funded projects. The
47 Conservancy will encourage use of best management practices and
48 innovative designs that reduce or avoid greenhouse gas emissions and, as
49 possible, will support developing these practices and designs through
50 funding and other actions.

- 1 4. Carbon Offset Credits. Recognizing a carbon market could provide
2 economic benefit to Delta residents, the Conservancy will explore the
3 development of an offset credits program for farm carbon sequestration,
4 which meets the requirements of the California Air Resources Board cap-
5 and-trade regulation.
- 6 5. Coordination. Climate change adaptation strategies will be coordinated
7 with the California Air Resources Board's AB 32 Scoping Plan process,
8 when appropriate, as well as with other local, state, and national efforts to
9 reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 10 6. Staff Operations. Where feasible, staff will attempt to reduce their
11 work-related greenhouse gas emissions from travel, through the use of
12 public transportation, carpooling, bicycling, fuel- efficient vehicles,
13 clustering meetings and events, and using phone- and web-based
14 conferencing technologies.

15 ***Assessing Risk from Climate Change***

16
17
18 Sea-Level Rise. To meet the requirements of Executive Order S-13-08, the
19 Conservancy will consider the current range of sea-level rise (SLR) projections
20 presented in the Interim Guidance Document (CO-CAT 2010) in assessing projects.
21 When assessing potential impacts, the Conservancy will consider the project's
22 timeline and the project's capacity to adapt to SLR. The Conservancy will avoid using
23 SLR values for project planning that result in high risk of climate change impacts to
24 public health and safety, public and private investments, the environment,
25 agriculture, and the economy of the Delta. The Conservancy will use the Interim
26 Guidance Document (CO-CAT 2010), which describes the amount of risk involved in
27 a decision as dependent upon the consequences and the likelihood of realized
28 impacts that may result from SLR. Realized impacts depend on the extent to which a
29 project integrates an accurate projection of SLR.

30
31 Other Impacts from Climate Change. Potential climate change impacts in the Delta
32 include, but are not limited to, increased air, soil and water temperature; loss of
33 agricultural land; flooding; drought; severe storms; increased salinity; degraded
34 water quality; declining crop yields; decreased biodiversity; new disease or pest
35 invasion; invasive species; and loss of life. Not all Conservancy projects will be
36 subject to climate change impacts; however, for those projects that have the potential
37 to be impacted by climate change, the Conservancy will weigh the risk of climate
38 change impacts to the project with the economic benefit of the project to the region.
39 There may be cases where the known near-term benefits outweigh the unknown
40 long-term risks to the project from climate change.

41 ***Adaptation Strategies***

42
43
44 The Conservancy will encourage programs and funded projects that are consistent
45 with our co-equal responsibilities to advance environmental protection and the
46 economic well-being of Delta residents and contain strategies, such as the ones listed
47 in the project examples below, that can assist the Delta in adapting to climate change:

- 48 a. Innovative projects pertaining to any of the Conservancy's mandates that
49 incorporate features that are resilient to climate change impacts or
50 increase the area's ability to adapt to potential impacts from climate

- 1 change;
- 2 b. Delta island subsidence reversal and land accretion (e.g., rice cultivation)
- 3 projects to reduce the risk of levee failure;
- 4 c. Projects that reduce flood impacts through levee maintenance and
- 5 improvement and other measures to protect farmland and reduce
- 6 damages to Conservancy investments and meet the Conservancy's
- 7 legislative mandates;
- 8 d. Projects that protect or restore habitats (e.g., floodplain, riparian) that
- 9 can lessen flood flows to reduce flooding in the Delta;
- 10 e. Projects that create buffer zones adjacent to tidal wetlands to allow tidal
- 11 wetlands to move toward land in response to SLR;
- 12 f. Projects that conserve, restore and enhance habitats and land that
- 13 sequester carbon;
- 14 g. Projects that incorporate and contribute to overall ecosystem health and
- 15 viability through preserving or reestablishing movement corridors for
- 16 terrestrial and aquatic species;
- 17 h. Projects which incorporate efforts to prevent the introduction or spread
- 18 of invasive species or control invasive species populations.
- 19

20 ***Adaptive Management***

21

22 Given the uncertainties associated with climate change related impacts on natural

23 resources, restoration that can accommodate or adapt to climate change impacts is

24 more likely to have longer- term success. A science-based adaptive management plan

25 and long-term monitoring will be key components to successfully carrying out

26 restoration and economic development that can adapt to the affects of climate

27 change. The Delta Reform Act requires that ecosystem restoration actions in the

28 Delta include a formal adaptive management strategy (Water Code section 85308(f)).

29 The Fifth Staff Draft Delta Plan describes a nine-step adaptive management

30 framework (Delta Stewardship Council 2011). The three broad phases and their

31 respective steps are described below:

32

- 33
- 34
- 35
- 36
- 37
- 38
- 39
- Plan (define/redefine the problem; establish goals and objectives; model linkages between objectives and proposed actions; select and evaluate research, pilot, or full-scale action);
 - Do (design and implement action; design and implement monitoring plan); and
 - Evaluate and Respond (analyze, synthesize, and evaluate; communicate current understanding; adapt).
- 40

41 Restoration projects and other applicable projects funded by the Conservancy shall

42 contain an adaptive management plan consistent with the adaptive management

43 framework described in the Delta Plan.

44

45 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR RESOLUTION AND**

46 **GUIDELINES**

47

48 Over the last half of the 20th century, changes in the climate patterns of the western

49 United States were observed that are attributed to greenhouse gas emissions from

50 human activities (Barnett et al. 2008; IPCC 2007). These observed patterns are

1 mirrored in California’s changing hydrology and include increasing winter and spring
2 air temperatures and extended growing seasons (Cayan et al. 2001), a greater
3 proportion of precipitation falling as rain rather than snow (Knowles et al. 2006),
4 less snowpack on mountain ranges (Mote 2003), and earlier snow-fed streamflows by
5 1 to 4 weeks (Stewart et al. 2005). The earlier runoff may also be accompanied by
6 increases in the magnitude of peak runoff events and greater variability from
7 year-to-year (Maurer 2007). These climatic variations are expected to continue into
8 the 21st century even if greenhouse gases are substantially reduced, and will be
9 experienced as larger and more sustained long-term trends (IPCC 2007).

10 11 ***The Greenhouse Effect and Climate Change***

12
13 The Earth’s temperature is regulated by a process commonly known as the
14 “greenhouse effect.” In this process, heat emitted by the Earth’s surface is absorbed
15 by greenhouse gases (GHG) in the atmosphere. As the atmosphere warms, it in turn
16 radiates a portion of this heat back to the surface. The most abundant GHG in the
17 atmosphere are water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone.
18

19 Climate change is a shift in the typical weather pattern in a given region.
20 Measurements of weather characteristics, such as temperature, precipitation, wind
21 patterns, and storms can be used to assess changes in climate. The Earth’s climate
22 has always been, and still is, constantly changing. However, the climate change
23 observed today differs from previous climate change in both its rate and its
24 magnitude (California Environmental Protection Agency 2006).
25

26 The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in the
27 Fourth Assessment Report (2007) concluded that average temperatures in the
28 Northern Hemisphere during the second half of the 20th century were likely higher
29 than any other 50-year period in the last 1,300 years. The IPCC reported the
30 atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide were
31 higher than previously measured using the ice core record of the past 650,000 years.
32 The IPCC also reported that the average rate of increase in atmospheric carbon
33 dioxide from 1960 to 1999 was at least five times larger than over any other 40-year
34 period during the two millennia before the industrial era (IPCC 2007). These results
35 confirm for the IPCC that climate change is occurring and is the result of human
36 activity.
37

38 There are both human and natural causes of climate change. The Earth’s climate is
39 influenced by changes in (1) atmospheric concentrations of GHG and aerosols, (2)
40 solar radiation, and (3) land surface. The scientific standard to measure these
41 changes and to understand how human and natural factors can contribute to
42 warming or cooling is called “radiative forcing” (IPCC 2007). The IPCC Fourth
43 Assessment Report analyzed radiative forcing from human and natural sources and
44 concluded that: (1) most of the observed warming over the past 50 years is very likely
45 due to human contributions to greenhouse gas concentrations; (2) carbon dioxide is
46 the most important anthropogenic greenhouse gas; and (3) the primary sources of
47 increased carbon dioxide concentrations are from fossil fuel use and land use change,
48 while those of methane and nitrous oxide are primarily due to agriculture. The IPCC
49 further concluded that human activities have influenced ocean warming,
50 continental-average temperatures, temperature extremes, and wind patterns.

1
2 **Emission Scenarios**
3

4 While there is general agreement that the planet is warming, the degree and timing of
5 this change is less certain. In order to predict future climate change, it is necessary to
6 determine how much GHG could be emitted into the atmosphere in the future and
7 the potential response of climatic, oceanic and terrestrial systems to increasing
8 atmospheric concentration of these gases. To address this uncertainty, the IPCC
9 Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES) developed a range of scenarios for
10 future GHG emissions based on different social, economic, demographic,
11 environmental, and technological developments (IPCC 2000).
12

13 The A1 scenario is characterized by a global population that peaks in mid-century,
14 rapid economic growth, and accelerated introduction of new and more efficient
15 technologies. There are substantial reductions in regional differences in per capita
16 income and increased cultural and social interactions. This scenario is further
17 divided into three categories based on energy sources: fossil fuel intensive (A1F1) –
18 the highest emission scenario, non-fossil fuel energy sources (A1T), and balance
19 across all sources (A1B).
20

21 The A2 scenario, medium-high emission scenario, describes continuously increasing
22 population growth, slow regional economic growth, slower technological growth than
23 other scenarios. The underlying theme is preservation of local identities and
24 self-reliance.
25

26 The B1 scenario, the lowest emission scenario, describes the same population growth
27 rate as A1, but with rapid changes in economic bases that are less material intensive,
28 and the introduction of clean and resource-efficient technologies. There is an
29 emphasis on environmental sustainability and global solutions.
30

31 The B2 scenario depicts a future with continuously increasing global population, but
32 at a rate lower than A2. There is an intermediate level of economic development and
33 technological change is less rapid and more diverse than in the B1 and A1 scenarios.
34 Local solutions to economic, social, and environmental sustainability are the
35 emphasis of this scenario.
36

37 Projected warming for different scenario emissions are provided in the IPCC Fourth
38 Assessment Report and are shown in Table 1. These include best estimates of
39 projected warming and the likely range due to uncertainties associated with the
40 emission scenarios. Global average temperatures are projected to increase from 3.2
41 to 7.2 °F (1.8 – 4.0 °C) by the end of the 21st century. In the near-term, a warming of
42 about 0.36 °F (0.2 °C) per decade is projected for the next 20 years over a range of
43 SRES emission scenarios.
44
45

Table 1. Projected Temperature Change

Scenario	Temperature Change (Degrees at 2090-2099 relative to 1980-1999)			
	Best Estimate		Likely Range	
	°F	°C	°F	°C
Constant Year 2000	1.1	0.6	0.5-1.6	0.3-0.9

Concentrations				
B1	3.2	1.8	2.0-5.2	1.1-2.9
B2	4.3	2.4	2.5-6.8	1.4-3.8
A2	6.1	3.4	3.6-9.7	2.0-5.4
A1F1	7.2	4.0	4.3-11.5	2.4-6.4

Adapted from IPCC 2007.

Sea Level Rise

There are two major processes contributing to SLR. First, thermal expansion, where a warming atmosphere is causing the ocean to warm and water expands as it warms. Second, warmer temperatures are melting glaciers and continental ice sheets. Over the past century, sea levels have risen about 8 in (20 cm) along the California coast, similar to global mean sea level increases (Cayan et al. 2008a). The rate of global sea level rise has risen significantly in recent years and it is expected to continue to increase through the 21st century (IPCC 2007).

Future SLR due to thermal expansion and some components of melting ice can be projected. However, future contributions to SLR from the melting Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets could be significant, but current models are unable to satisfactorily quantify the rate of discharge from these ice sheets. Excluding these potentially significant contributions, global sea level is projected to rise 10 to 23 in (26 to 59 cm) by the end of this century under the highest emissions scenario (A1F1) and 7 to 15 in (18 to 38 cm) under the lower emissions scenario (B1) (IPCC 2007). If recent observations in ice discharge rates were to scale up in proportion to future global temperature change, the upper bound of sea level rise projections could increase by 4 to 8 in (10 to 20 cm) (IPCC 2007).

Another approach to projecting future SLR was developed using the calculated relationship between global mean temperature and sea level. This method was refined and applied to observed data of sea level and temperature for the years 1800 – 2000; the calculated values were found to very closely match the observed values (Vermeer and Rahmstorf 2009). Using the IPCC temperature projections over a range of climate scenarios from the Fourth Assessment Report, Vermeer and Rahmstorf (2009) estimate sea level to rise 32 to 70 in (81 to 179 cm) above 1990 levels by 2100. These projections do not include rapid changes in ice flow. It is not known if the ice-melt contributions to SLR contained in the last 120 years of observed data is sufficient to model future contributions. Another notable aspect of these projections is the time lag between emission reductions and a response in SLR, which suggests that emission reductions earlier in this century will be much more effective in slowing SLR than reductions later on.

Sea Level Rise and Extreme Events

The Delta is subject to high river discharge and storm surge (water that is pushed inland by the force of the winds from a storm and results in higher water levels). These two factors can severely impact the levees that protect the Delta, as the frequency of large storms is directly related to the frequency of levee failures (Florsheim and Dettinger 2007). Increasing SLR exacerbates the impacts of high tides, storm surge, and freshwater floods (Cayan et. al. 2008a). Rising sea levels

1 combined with tides, storms, or climatic fluctuations (such as El Niño-Southern
2 Oscillation events) result in high sea level extremes and the frequency of these
3 extremes may increase if storms become more frequent or severe as a result of
4 climate change. Extreme sea levels can result in salinity intrusion into the Delta. The
5 greatest impact to the Delta will occur when extreme sea levels and freshwater floods
6 coincide. The increase in the time levees are stressed by high water levels will raise
7 the likelihood of failure significantly (Cayan et al. 2008b). During the 1997-98 El
8 Niño event, non-tide water levels in parts of the Delta stayed above 16 in (40 cm) for
9 longer than 12 hours (Bromirski and Flick 2008). As the magnitude of future SLR
10 increases, the frequency and magnitude of extreme events will escalate, as seen in the
11 20-fold increase in extreme tides since 1915 as measured at San Francisco (Cayan et
12 al. 2008a). Because processes in the Bay-Delta and global climate systems are
13 complex and interconnected, climate changes effects are uncertain; surprising and
14 compounded responses may occur (Dettinger and Culbertson 2008).

15
16 SLR is expected to increase pressure on levees over time which could lead to a greater
17 risk of levee breaches or overtopping (Knowles 2010). Failure to plan for SLR with
18 continued investments in Delta levee maintenance and improvements will have
19 negative implications for managed wetlands behind levees, such as those in the
20 Suisun Marsh. A portion of the marsh is already subtidal. However, the majority of
21 the Suisun Marsh would be in a subtidal zone under a 39 in (100 cm) sea level rise
22 (Knowles 2010). While wetlands have the ability to build up organic and mineral
23 sediment (accretion), current inorganic sediment supply may not be sufficient to
24 prevent the shallowest areas of Suisun Bay from getting deeper, even under a
25 moderate rate of SLR (Ganju and Schoellhamer 2010). Absent significant accretion,
26 the seasonal gravity draining of leveed wetlands, managed as waterfowl habitat,
27 would become impossible (Knowles 2010).

28
29 Salinity in the Delta is expected to significantly increase due to SLR and island
30 flooding (Lund et al. 2008). With SLR the ocean pushes its higher-salinity water
31 farther into the Delta. A one foot SLR may mean low enough salinity in Delta water to
32 continue irrigation during the growing season; however, higher levels of salinity in
33 the southern Delta, especially in the fall, would significantly increase the costs of
34 drinking water treatment. A three feet SLR may make this water unsuitable for
35 irrigation.

36 37 ***Climate Change Impacts in the Delta***

38
39 In addition to SLR and extreme climatic events there are other potential impacts to
40 the Delta from climate change. To better understand how future climate patterns may
41 change, results from global climate models are “downscaled” to a finer resolution.
42 This process helps correct some biases in areas like California that have complex
43 landscapes that cannot be adequately represented at the coarse scale of global climate
44 models (Cayan et al. 2008b).

45
46 Cayan et al. (2008b) evaluated different climate change model simulations from the
47 IPCC Fourth Assessment to estimate future climate changes in California. In each
48 simulation temperatures in California warm significantly by 2100, with inc

49
50 C) in the higher emissions A1F1 scenario. Human-induced climate

1 changes are expected to progress rapidly (Dettinger and Culberson 2008). This is
2 illustrated by the projected changes in the likelihood of exceeding various
3 annual-temperature increases in each decade of the 21st century, based on an
4 ensemble of 84 projections from 12 climate models (Dettinger 2005). By the year
5 2030, almost no years will be cool compared to the 20th century. Projected
6 consequences of these temperature increases include further declines of snow pack,
7 reduced viability of many species of fruit trees, increased range of agricultural pests,
8 decreasing hydropower generation, increased fire frequency, and greater
9 concentrations of air pollutants (Cayan et al. 2008c).

10
11 In the Delta, similar changes may be expected. Cloern et al. (2011) simulated the B1
12 emission scenario using a model with low sensitivity to GHG emissions and the A2
13 emission scenario (medium-high emissions) with a medium-sensitivity model. In
14 both scenarios, air temperatures in the Delta increase steadily, but the rate of change
15 is more rapid in the A2 scenario than in the B1 scenario. Under these models,
16 precipitation continuously declines through the end of the century in the A2 scenario.
17 While there is no obvious trend in precipitation change in the B2 scenario, this
18 projection shows large variation from year-to-year (interannual variability), which
19 includes years of extreme high precipitation and multi- year drought. As with
20 precipitation, unimpaired runoff and snowmelt declines in the A2 scenario. Runoff
21 displays the same large interannual variability as precipitation in the B2 scenario. As
22 with state-wide patterns, there is a shift toward runoff occurring earlier in the year.

23
24 These climate and hydrologic projections were used to assess how habitat quality will
25 be altered by climate change. Water temperatures in the Delta will increase steadily
26 in both scenarios, with more rapid increases in the A2 scenario. Lethal temperatures
27 for both Chinook salmon and Delta smelt will occur more frequently and the timing
28 of spring spawning temperatures will shift to earlier in the year (Cloern et al. 2011,
29 Wagner et al. 2011). Managing for these increased temperatures will be more
30 challenging as decreasing snowmelt reduces the amount of cold water runoff
31 available in upstream reservoirs. In addition to temperature changes, aquatic species
32 will be affected by the change in water quantity. In the A2 scenario, the frequency of
33 spring floods with the duration needed for successful spawning and rearing of
34 Sacramento splittail decreases (Cloern et al. 2011).

35
36 Another indicator of habitat quality, suspended sediment supply, is projected to
37 decrease in both future climate scenarios, which will increase the vulnerability of
38 tidal marshes and mudflats to SLR (Cloern et al. 2011). Decreased sediment supply
39 also has implications for native species, such as the Delta smelt, that are adapted to
40 turbid waters. Conditions for nonnative species will also become more favorable as
41 temperatures increase.

42
43 Agriculture will be affected by the consequences of climate change as well. Irrigation
44 demand will increase to meet a higher evaporative demand, the occurrence of
45 agricultural pests will increase, and rising temperatures will have a direct effect on
46 commodity quality and quantity (Hayhoe et al. 2004). Dairy production in California
47 is projected to decrease by as much as 22% by the end of the century under the high
48 emission scenario. Wine grape quality is affected by extreme temperatures during the
49 ripening period. Across the range of emission scenarios, wine grapes are projected to
50 ripen one to two months earlier and at a higher temperature, leading to degraded

1 quality (Hayhoe et al. 2004).

3 ***Carbon Emissions in the Delta***

4
5 Agricultural land use practices in the Delta have oxidized more than 2 million
6 acre-feet of peat soils collectively over the past century. This has led to subsidence
7 down to 20-25 feet below sea level on many islands in the Delta (Mount and Twiss
8 2005). These soils continue to oxidize from current agricultural land use practices,
9 emitting about 4.4 to 5.3 million tons of carbon dioxide annually. This represents
10 approximately 1% of California's total emissions, with California being the
11 twelfth-largest emitter of carbon in the world (Merrill et al. 2010). The amount of
12 peat available for oxidation has been and will continue to decrease over time. Peat
13 soils have already been completely removed in the southern Delta and portions of the
14 eastern Delta, but are still present in the central, western, and northern Delta and, if
15 farmed, will continue to oxidize and emit carbon dioxide (Lund et al. 2007).

16
17 While the Delta is a source of carbon emissions, it has the potential to sequester
18 carbon as well. Research conducted in the Delta over the past 15 years shows that
19 native tule wetlands have the ability to capture carbon at very high rates and, in the
20 process, accrete soil that reverses subsidence (Merrill et al. 2010). Executive Order
21 S-3-05 calls for California to reduce GHG emission to 80% below 1990 levels by
22 2050. Projects that sequester carbon in the Delta, like carbon capture wetland farms,
23 can contribute toward the State reaching this goal and have the additional benefit of
24 reversing subsidence and reducing pressure on existing levees.

26 **CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION AND POLICIES**

27
28 The State of California has adopted a wide variety of laws and policies targeted at
29 reducing GHG emissions and addressing the potential impacts from SLR. Below is a
30 summary of key climate change laws and policies pertinent to the Delta.

32 **Executive Order S-3-05**

33 This order calls for the State to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 and to
34 reduce GHG emissions to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Additionally, this
35 order established the Climate Action Team (CAT) for State agencies. The CAT is
36 chaired by the Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

38 **Assembly Bill 32 (2006)**

39 The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32) set the 2020 GHG
40 emission reduction goal into law. It directed the Air Resource Board (ARB) to
41 develop a scoping plan to identify how to best reach the 2020 limit. AB 32 also
42 directed the ARB to adopt regulations requiring the mandatory reporting of GHG
43 emissions and to identify and adopt regulations for discrete early actions to reduce
44 GHG that could be enforceable on or before January 1, 2010.

45
46 On October 20, 2011, the ARB adopted the final cap-and-trade regulation. Rules for
47 quantifying offset credits have been developed for livestock projects, ozone depleting
48 substances projects, urban forest projects, and U.S. forest projects.

50 **AB 32 Climate Change Scoping Plan (2008)**

1 This plan outlines actions to reach the GHG reduction goals required in AB 32.
2 Several strategies pertinent to agriculture are encouraging investments in methane
3 capture systems at dairies and increasing carbon sequestration.

4 Senate Bill 97 (2007)

5 SB 97 required the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to develop
6 recommended amendments to State CEQA Guidelines for addressing GHG
7 emissions. These amendments were to provide guidance on how to determine
8 significance and mitigate the effects of GHG emissions. The CEQA Guidelines were
9 amended in March 2010 to incorporate these provisions.
10

11 Executive Order S-13-08

12 Executive Order S-13-08 calls for the State to implement a number of actions to
13 reduce vulnerability to climate change. This order directs the California Natural
14 Resources Agency to request that the National Academy of Sciences convene an
15 independent panel to develop a Sea Level Rise Assessment Report. Prior to the
16 release of this report, all State agencies shall consider a range of SLR scenarios for
17 the years 2050 and 2100 in order to assess project vulnerability and, to the extent
18 feasible, reduce expected risk and increase resiliency to sea level rise. Additionally,
19 this order directs the California Natural Resources Agency, through the CAT, to
20 develop a state Climate Adaptation Strategy.
21

22 2009 California Climate Adaptation Strategy

23 This document, required by EO S-13-08, summarizes the best known science on
24 climate change impacts to California and outlines strategies to increase California's
25 resiliency from the impacts from climate change. Adaptive and mitigation strategies
26 are seen as complementary and equally necessary approaches. One key
27 recommendation is for all State agencies responsible for managing and regulating
28 public health, infrastructure or habitat subject to significant climate change should
29 prepare agency- specific adaptation plans, guidance, or criteria by September 2010.
30

31 Amendments to the CEQA Guidelines (2010)

32 On March 18, 2010, the Natural Resource Agency adopted CEQA Guidelines
33 Amendments, implementing SB 97. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research
34 summarized the amendments as follows:
35

- 36 • "Lead agencies must analyze the greenhouse gas emissions of proposed
37 projects, and must reach a conclusion regarding the significance of those
38 emissions.
- 39 • When a project's greenhouse gas emissions may be significant, lead
40 agencies must consider a range of potential mitigation measures to
41 reduce those emissions.
- 42 • Lead agencies must analyze potentially significant impacts associated
43 with placing projects in hazardous locations, including locations
44 potentially affected by climate change.
- 45 • Lead agencies may significantly streamline the analysis of greenhouse
46 gases on a project level by using a programmatic greenhouse gas
47 emissions reduction plan meeting certain criteria.
- 48 • CEQA mandates analysis of a proposed project's potential energy use
49 (including transportation- related energy), sources of energy supply, and
50 ways to reduce energy demand, including through the use of efficient

1 transportation alternatives.”

2
3 State of California Sea-Level Rise Interim Guidance Document (2010)

4 This document was developed by the Sea-Level Rise Task Force of the Coastal and
5 Ocean Working Group of the California Climate Action Team (CO-CAT). It provides
6 guidance for incorporating SLR projections into planning and decision making for
7 projects in California and will be regularly revised to incorporate the latest scientific
8 understanding on climate change and SLR. The Interim Guidance Document
9 recommends using the range of SLR values shown in Table 2. They note that these
10 projections do not account for catastrophic ice melt and, therefore, may
11 underestimate actual SLR. After 2050, the three different SLR values are based on
12

13 Table 2. Sea-Level Rise Projections using 2000 as the Baseline

Year		Average of Models	Range of Models
2030		7 in (18 cm)	5-8in (13-21 cm)
2050		14 in (36 cm)	10-17 in (26-43 cm)
2070	Low	23 in (59 cm)	17-27 in (43-70 cm)
	Medium	24 in (62 cm)	18-29 in (46-74 cm)
	High	27 in (69 cm)	20-32 in (51-81 cm)
2100	Low	40 in (101 cm)	31-50 in (78-128 cm)
	Medium	47 in (121 cm)	37-60 in (95-152 cm)
	High	55 in (140 cm)	43-69 in (110-176 cm)

14 Source: State of California Sea-Level Rise Interim Guidance Document (2010)

15
16 Other recommendations include consider the project timeframe, adaptive capacity of
17 the project, and risk tolerance when selecting SLR estimates; coordinate with other
18 state agencies when selecting values of SLR and, where appropriate and feasible, use
19 the same projections of SLR; future SLR projections should not be based on linear
20 extrapolation of historic sea level observations; consider trends in relative local mean
21 sea level; consider storms and other extreme events; and consider changing
22 shorelines.

23
24 Resolution of the Ocean Protection Council on Sea-Level Rise (2011)

25 This resolution states that State agencies should incorporate consideration of the risk
26 posed by SLR into all decisions regarding areas or programs potential affected by
27 SLR. State agencies should follow the recommendations described in the Interim
28 Guidance Document developed by the CO-CAT and any subsequent guidance
29 documents. State agencies should assess potential impacts and vulnerabilities over a
30 range of SLR projections, including analysis of the highest SLR values, and should
31 avoid making decisions based on SLR values that would result in high risk.
32

33 ACRONYMS

34		
35	CAT	Climate Action Team
36	CO-CAT	Coastal and Ocean Working Group of the California Climate Action Team
37	GHG	Greenhouse Gases
38	IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
39	SLR	Sea Level Rise
40	SRES	Special Report on Emissions Scenarios

1
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- 17
- 18

1 Appendix D:

Input for Strategic Plan Development

The following people generously provided input for development of the preliminary draft Strategic Plan that was posted on the Conservancy's web page for comments.

Name		Affiliation
Jim	Allan	Solano County Agricultural Commissioner
Lucia	Becerra	California Department of Boating and Waterways
Bruce	Blodgett	San Joaquin County Farm Bureau
George	Booth	Sacramento County Department of Water Resources
Dennis	Clark	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Lawrence	Clement	Solano County Farm Bureau
Mark	Cowan	Sacramento District Army Corps of Engineers
Susan	Dell'Osso	River Islands at Lathrop
Matty	Evoy-Mount	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
John	Greitzer	Contra Costa Water Agency
Vincent	Guise	Contra Costa County Agricultural Commissioner
Cathy	Hack	Sacramento County Division of Environmental Review and Assessment
Ken	Hagen	Farmer/Harvest Time
Lauren	Hastings	Delta Stewardship Council
John	Herrick	South Delta Water Agency
Scott	Hudson	San Joaquin Agricultural Commissioner
Juli	Jensen	Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner
John	Kopchik	East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan

Derrick Lum	Solano County Farm Bureau
Cindy Messer	Delta Stewardship Council
Charlotte Mitchell	Sacramento County Farm Bureau
Shelley M Murdock	UC Cooperative Extension Contra Costa
Mike Nepstad	Sacramento District Army Corps of Engineers
Katie Patterson	San Joaquin County Farm Bureau
Mary Piepho	Contra Costa Supervisor, District 3
Jim Provenza	Yolo County Supervisor, District 4
Rich Radmacher	South Sacramento County Habitat Conservation Plan
Mike Reagan	Solano County Supervisor, District 5
Brooke Schlenker	Sacramento District Army Corps of Engineers
Jim Townsend	East Bay Regional Park District
Russell Van Loben Sels	Sacramento County Farm Bureau
John Veitch	Contra Costa County Farm Bureau
John Viano	Contra Costa County Farm Bureau
Ken Vogel	San Joaquin County Supervisor, District 4
Michael Winter	Sacramento County Department of Planning and Community Development
Eddie Woodruff	Delta Conservancy Board Member
Jimmie Yee	Sacramento County Supervisor, District 2
John Young	Yolo County Agricultural Commissioner
Tom Zuckerman	Central Delta Water Agency



**Sacramento-San Joaquin
Delta Conservancy**

www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov

comments@deltaconservancy.ca.gov

916.375.2084

