

D R A F T I N T E R I M
developed for the Strategic Plan Subcommittee

SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA CONSERVANCY



DRAFT INTERIM
STRATEGIC PLAN

December 2, 2010

To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream; not only plan, but also believe.

ANATOLE FRANCE

A hundred years after we are gone and forgotten, those who never heard of us will be living with the results of our actions.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

A common mistake people make when trying to design something foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools.

DOUGLAS ADAMS

Inaugural 2010-2011
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Board

Mary Piepho, Chair

Ken Vogel, Vice-Chair

Chuck Bonham

Mike Eaton

Karen Finn

Jim Provenza

Lester Snow

Dan Taylor

Eddie Woodruff

Jimmie Yee

Senate appointment

Senator Lois Wolk, Ex-Officio Member

Assmeblymember to be named, Ex-Officio Member

Liaison Advisors

Pablo Arroyave

Steve Chappell

Jessica Davenport

Amy Hutzel

Robin Kulakow

Ren Lohofener

Paul Robershotte

Emma Suarez

Mark Wilson

Yet to be named (NMFS)

Arnold Schwarzenegger

Governor

Lester A. Snow

Secretary for Natural Resources Agency

Cindy Messer

Interim Executive Officer

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

This draft interim strategic plan was prepared for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Board by:

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Executive Summary

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (SSJDC or Conservancy) is a state agency within the Natural Resources Agency and was established through legislation on February 3, 2010.

The Conservancy is a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta in collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested parties. In addition, the Conservancy is to support efforts that advance both environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents in a complementary manner. These are the co-equal responsibilities of the Conservancy.

The Conservancy also has a broad array of other charges ranging from protecting and preserving Delta agriculture and working landscapes to assisting the Delta regional economy through the operation of the conservancy's programs.

The Conservancy has statewide significance because it is integral to achieving the state's co-equal goals of ecosystem restoration and water supply reliability. The SSJDC is charged with a broad mission that will be accomplished through collaboration and cooperation with various partners.

The Delta Conservancy Board is required by statute to complete and adopt a strategic plan within two years after hiring its executive officer (Public Resources Code Section 32376). The strategic plan will guide the vision, mission, and objectives of the Conservancy over the next three to five years.

Under Section 32376, the strategic plan will be developed in cooperation with various stakeholders through an open, public process. The plan will be designed to address the Conservancy's role and proposed actions regarding land use, recreation, water and flood management, and habitat conservation and protection within the legal Delta.

The strategic plan shall also establish priorities and criteria for projects and programs, based upon an assessment of program requirements, resources, and funding needs throughout the Delta. Finally, the statute requires that the Conservancy's strategic plan be consistent with the Delta Plan, the Delta Protection Commission's Resource Management Plan, the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977, and the Habitat Management, Preservation, and Restoration Plan for the Suisun Marsh (Public Resources Code Sec. 32376). Two of these plans—the Delta Plan and the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan—are not yet completed.

Because two of the plans with which the Conservancy's strategic plan must be consistent are not completed, the Conservancy is developing a draft interim strategic plan to guide Conservancy operations through 2014. The plan outlines the vision, mission, and guiding principles of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, and develops the foundation for the programs and activities to achieve its vision and mission. Program areas are defined by law (Public Resources Code 32322).

Key information presented in this draft of the interim strategic plan includes:

- An agency vision describing the desired outcome of the Conservancy's efforts
- A mission statement that reflects the charge given to the Conservancy by the State Legislature and the Governor
- A set of guiding principles that establish the basis for how the Conservancy will provide its services and relate to its stakeholders

Further versions of this draft interim strategic plan may include refined:

- Assessment of the external and internal conditions that affect how the Conservancy can carry out its programs
- Series of organizational strategies and goals that describe the steps necessary to create a successful organization
- Set of programmatic goals and actions to create a sound foundation for the Conservancy's work
- Glossary of terms used in this document

This draft was created by Conservancy staff at the direction of the Strategic Plan subcommittee. Staff anticipates that future versions of this draft interim strategic plan will be created through an open and transparent process that includes full Board participation and public workshops. The final version of the strategic plan must be adopted by the Board no later than 2013 [note: the 2013 date is if the executive officer is hired in 2011; Public Resources Code Section 32376].

The Conservancy may modify the Plan as needed to adapt to new information, changed circumstances, or unanticipated events. Any Plan modifications will be made through the Board's open, public process. The plan will be reviewed periodically to determine progress, and will be revised at least every five years [note: is this what the subcommittee sees as the plan schedule?]

A copy of this plan and other related information can be found at the Conservancy's website: <http://www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov>. CD or printed copies may also be requested by contacting the Conservancy at (916) 375-2084. Hard copies are also located at our headquarter office at 3500 Industrial Blvd., West Sacramento.

Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how.

EDWARD T. McMAHON

The best way to predict the future is to invent it.

IMMANUEL KANT

About the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy

Vision

Option 1: The Conservancy acts with others to preserve, protect and restore the resources of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh. It will serve as an example of economy and environment in harmony. Our vision is of a rich, diverse, restored, and accessible Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh.

Option 2: The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy's vision for the future is:

The unique and significant Delta and Suisun Marsh enjoy outstanding environmental, economic, and social health with vibrant communities and landscapes sustained for future generations.

Vision: an inspiring picture of what the organization would like to become beyond today. It is not bound by time, represents continuing purposes, and serves as a foundation for a system of strategic planning. It is intended to provide purpose into the Conservancy's activities, demonstrate long-term direction, and depict a strong identity of who we are. *Vision is the effect.*

- "What will success look like?"
- Realist and credible
- Well articulated and easy to understand
- Ambitious

Features:

- Rich and diverse natural, physical, and living resources are protected and conserved.
- Healthy, diverse, and economically sustainable Delta communities thrive, prepared for and protected from natural disasters.
- Californians value and invest in healthy watersheds that provide the Delta with high quality water, spectacular scenery, and important wildlife habitat.
- Sustainable working landscapes provide environmental, economic, and social benefits to the Delta.
- The Delta's cultural, archeological, and historical resources are preserved, visited, and treasured.
- Healthy and sustainable tourism, recreation, and commercial activities are valued and encouraged.

Mission Statement

Option 1: The Conservancy will partner with others to

- protect,
- preserve, and
- enhance the
 - Delta environment,
 - heritage,
 - property,
 - regional economy,
 - agriculture and working landscapes, and
 - increase opportunities for tourism

for the benefit of the Delta region, its communities, and the citizens of California.

Mission: A mission statement is a written declaration of the Conservancy’s purpose and focus that clearly states who is being served and how. It succinctly identifies what the organization does, why, and for whom it does it. *Mission is the cause.*

- “Who are we?”
- “Why are we here?”
- “Who do we serve?”

Option 2: The mission of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy is to support efforts that advance both environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents in a complementary manner. The Conservancy's activities include the following: protecting and enhancing habitat and habitat restoration; protecting and preserving Delta agriculture and working landscapes; providing increased opportunities for tourism and recreation; promoting Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta; increasing the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes; protecting and improving water quality; assisting the Delta regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's program; identifying priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed; conducting activities to protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources; assisting local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans; facilitating protection and safe harbor agreements under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the California Endangered Species Act for adjacent land owners and local public agencies; and promoting environmental education. The Conservancy will act as a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta and to support efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of the Delta residents.

Description

The SSJDC is a state agency within the Natural Resources Agency. The Conservancy’s service area is the statutory Delta and Suisun Marsh, approximately 1,300 square miles and more than 1,000 miles of levees and waterways. The Conservancy’s service area is home to the largest estuary on the west coast of the Americas; is home to more than 750 species of plants and wildlife as well as 55 species of fish, and provides habitat to migratory waterfowl as part of the Pacific Flyway; and contains more than 500,000 acres of agricultural land with unique soils.

In this draft interim strategic plan, the term “Delta” refers to both the legally defined delta [Statute reference] and the Suisun Marsh

The Delta provides numerous opportunities for recreation, such as boating, kayaking, fishing, hiking, bird watching, and hunting. The navigable waterways of the Delta are available for public access and make up the majority of current recreational activities.

There is a rich natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage in the Delta. It is home to the community of Locke, the only town in the United States built by early Chinese immigrants. Other legacy communities include Bethel Island, Clarksburg, Courtland, Freeport, Hood, Isleton, Knightsen, Rio Vista, Ryde, and Walnut Grove.

California depends on the Delta as a significant source of food and water; the Delta supports a \$4 billion economy and is traversed by energy, communications, and transportation facilities vital to the economic health of the state. As important as it is to the state, the Delta has also been de-

What is a Conservancy?

There are 11 conservancies established by California statute. There is no overarching definition of “conservancy” in statute, rather, each conservancy is defined in an of itself in its respective enabling legislation. For this draft interim strategic plan, conservancy is defined as:

1. A body concerned with the preservation of nature, specific species, or natural resources: *the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy.*
2. The conservation of something, especially wildlife and the environment, in particular:
 - preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, natural ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife;
 - preservation, repair, and prevention of deterioration of archaeological, historical, and cultural sites and artifacts; and
 - prevention of excessive or wasteful use of a resource.

scribed as one of the most environmentally fragile areas of the United States.

The Conservancy's service area covers part of six counties, most of which fall into five counties often collectively called the Delta Counties. The Delta Counties are Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo. A small segment of Alameda County also is in the Conservancy's service area.

Governance

The Conservancy is governed by a 23-member Board, including 11 voting members, 2 non-voting members, and 10 liaison advisors (Public Resources Code Section 32330 et seq.) The Board's chair is selected from the Delta Counties representative (Public Resources Code Section 32332). Board composition is:

Voting Members. The voting members are:

- Secretary for Natural Resources Agency or designee
- Director of Finance or designee
- Member or designee appointed by the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
- Member or designee appointed by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors
- Member or designee appointed by the San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors
- Member or designee appointed by the Solano County Board of Supervisors
- Member or designee appointed by the Yolo County Board of Supervisors
- 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

Public Resources Code Section 32330(a)(1-10)

County Boards of Supervisors may appoint alternates to the board. *Public Resources Code Section 32330(h)*

Ex-Officio (non-voting) Members. The non-voting members are:

- A member of the Senate, appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules
- A member of the Assembly, appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly

Public Resources Code Section 32330(b)

Liaison Advisors. The liaison advisors are:

- One representative from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- One representative from the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service
- One representative of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- One representative of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- A designee of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission
- A designee of the State Coastal Conservancy
- A designee of the Suisun Resource Conservation District
- A designee of the Central Valley Flood Protection Board
- A designee of the Delta Protection Commission
- A designee of the Yolo Basin Foundation

Section 32330(c)(1-10)

Program Description

The law creating the SSJDC outlines its mission, which are broadly characterized as the co-equal responsibilities of ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability in the Delta. All the Conservancy activities are based on the principles of collaboration and cooperation with local governments and interested parties (Public Resources Code Section 32320). The SSJDC shall:

- Act as a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta; and
- Support efforts that advance environmental protection and the economic well-being of Delta residents.

Program Areas

The statute creating the SSJDC provides for 12 specific program objectives:

- Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration.
- Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes.
- Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation in the Delta.
- Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.
- Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission.
- Protect and improve water quality.
- Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the conservancy's program.
- Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed.

Things the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy May Do:

- Receive or award grants and other funding;
- Develop projects and programs designed to further its purpose;
- Allocate funds to a separate program within the Conservancy for economic sustainability in the Delta;
- Collaborate, cooperate, and coordinate with interested parties to further the Conservancy's mission;
- Enter into agreements and contracts with willing participants;
- Provide technical information, expertise, program and project development and other non-financial assistance.

(See Appendix A for more detail regarding the Conservancy's statutory mandate and authority.)

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

This draft interim strategic plan guides programs, activities, and projects necessary to achieve these program objectives.

Decision-Making and Monitoring

The Conservancy uses the best available information and science in its decision-making and is committed to building collaborative and trusting relationships with local governments and interested parties. The SSJDC will build upon existing information and identify where key gaps or weaknesses may exist in order to further the Conservancy’s mission and vision. The Conservancy also is committed to conducting its information gathering and sharing in a collaborative and open manner.

A future role for the Conservancy may include research and monitoring activities on projects and programs that support its mission, even if those not initiated by the Conservancy, if project originators are willing to partner with the Conservancy for those services. The information gathered as part of the research and monitoring activities would be an integral part of the adaptive management and decision-making process for policy-makers and project originators alike.

Agency Funding Sources

The Conservancy’s base budget for basic operational needs consists of funding from the State General Fund. Currently, the Conservancy is investigating additional funding sources to develop and carry out its programs and partnerships.

Predominate among the long-term options for additional Conservancy funding is the Safe, Clean, Reliable Drinking Water Supply Act of 2010 (SBX7-2), which was deferred

to the 2012 election. If passed, this Act would authorize \$11.1 billion in general obligation bonds to finance a safe drinking water and water supply reliability program. The Conservancy anticipates receiving \$2.25 billion of those bond funds to carry out its ecosystem and economic programs in the Delta.

The Conservancy may pursue and accept funds from various sources, including, but not limited to, federal, state, and local funds or grants, gifts, donations, bequests, devises, subventions, grants, rents, royalties, or other assistance from funds from public and private sources. The Conservancy may also accept fees levied by others, or create and manage endowments (Public Resources Code Section 32372). The Conservancy is pursuing several of those options currently. [In Strategic Plan Subcommittee meeting, the concept of beneficiary pays came up. How does the subcommittee want to address that issue, here or elsewhere in the document?]

Conservancy Guiding Principles

This section lists the core values and philosophies describing how the Conservancy conducts itself in pursuing its mission. These include:

- Our Key Objectives*
- To build trust between Delta residents and interested parties as the Conservancy develops programs to meet its co-equal responsibilities of ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability for its service area.
 - To foster and encourage partnerships with Delta residents and other interested parties to mutually increase our respective abilities to achieve the Conservancy's mission and goals.
 - To maintain neutrality so all interested parties are provided an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the Conservancy's activities.
 - To build upon existing local government and regional efforts (including state and federal programs) to make progress on achieving the Conservancy's mission.
 - To inform and educate the public throughout the region and the state about the important contributions the Delta provides to all Californians, including providing water to two-thirds of the state, access to recreation and tourism, and the production of a variety of important agricultural products.

Implementing Our Programs

- To establish program priorities as a primary ecosystem restoration agent which consider the concerns of local, regional, and state stakeholders, through program and organizational flexibility.
- To strive to identify and implement activities that result in integrated environmental, economic, and social benefits rather than “either/or” outcomes.
- To maximize the public resource benefits and cost-effectiveness of our programs by securing services from both the private and public sector, and by using market-based approaches to generate revenues which are reinvested in our programs, where appropriate.
- To use the best available information and science in making decisions, identifying opportunities, and initiating and building upon Conservancy programs and projects.

How We Operate

- We are committed to innovation and to adapting to new information and situations.
- We are committed to seeking knowledge from others and to sharing what we have learned through our educational and communication activities.
- We are committed to attracting, developing and sustaining a competent, creative, and productive workforce to help the Conservancy meet its co-equal responsibilities.
- We are committed to being professional, courteous, responsive, ethical, and helpful in our dealings with each other and with people outside the Conservancy.
- We are committed to conducting operations openly. Decision making will be transparent, and we strive to improve communications throughout the region.
- We are committed to developing program priorities that consider the input received through community outreach efforts and seek to meet community needs, recognizing local and regional differences, through program and organizational flexibility.

Agency Assessment

The SSJDC came into existence on February 3, 2010. As a new organization, the Conservancy needs to create strategies and actions that recognize the many factors that support or create barriers to achieving its co-equal responsibilities. As the draft interim strategic plan is revised, more formal tools such as SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis, can be used to identify external and internal conditions that could impact the Conservancy's ability to fulfill its mission.

The following assessment summarizes existing information from several sources. The Conservancy anticipates refining this section through public forums.

External Assessments

The Delta covers only about 1 percent of the state's area, yet its size belies its contribution to the state and nation, as it provides a set of environmental and economic services whose benefits extend well beyond its borders. Those services include:

- Land uses (agricultural, urban, and conservation)
- Flood management
- Ecosystem services
- Water supply
- Water quality management and discharges
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Recreation and Tourism
- Local and state economies

As a dynamic system, the area's complexity presents data gaps and uncertainties even in light of increasing knowledge about the Delta. The services the Delta provides are interrelated, and there are conflicts within the system, especially between the ecosystem and water supply. All of the area's services depend on the levee system.

Listed below are some key points about the Delta:

- The predominant land uses in the Delta is agriculture and in the Suisun Marsh it is wetland conservation.

- Urban growth is limited by provisions in the Delta Protection Act and the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act, and the Delta is surrounded by some of the fastest growing areas in California.
- The Delta has about 500,000 acres of highly productive farmland, and about 40,000 acres of land use conversion from agriculture to urban and conservation occurred between 1990 and 2004.
- All Delta services rely on the levee system, yet the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently decided not to determine a base flood elevation, which impacts local governments and residents' ability to make land use decisions.
- Levees, most of which are locally built and maintained, are subject to failure from several sources.
- More than 10 percent of California's remaining wetlands are in the Suisun Marsh, which is an important wintering and nesting area for waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway.
- The Delta is considered among the most at-risk ecosystems in the United States.
- About 2/3 of Californians get some portion of their drinking water from the Delta; 87 percent of the municipal water used in the East Bay Area is either diverted or transported across the Delta; and almost 2.5 million acres of agricultural land outside of the Delta are irrigated with exported water.
- Water quality in the Delta can be negatively affected by upstream discharges, in-Delta discharges, and seawater intrusion. The Delta is managed to control salinity.
- In addition to being a water supply hub, the Delta is a transportation hub intersected by highways, shipping channels, and rail lines. The Sacramento and Stockton ports are key to goods movement in the state.
- The Delta is also intersected by a variety of utilities such as electrical transmission lines, natural gas pipelines, petroleum pipelines, water pipelines that serve Californians throughout the state.
- Recreation and tourism in the Delta currently is mostly water-based, primarily in the forms of fishing and boating. Other activities include waterfowl and upland game bird hunting, wildlife viewing, bird watching, and photography. Recreational opportunities will expand with the completion of the Great California Delta Trails initiative; eco-tourism and agri-tourism also will increase tourism opportunities in the Delta.

- The Delta is home to more than 500,000 people and 250,000 jobs, and contributes more than \$35 billion to the state’s economy. Infrastructure replacement costs in potentially flooded areas could reach \$40 billion or more.

External Challenges. A great deal of political and public attention has been focused on the Delta over the years. The recent round of this attention led to the creation of the Conservancy.

The scale, scope, and complexity of resources, funding, and institutional needs exceed the current capacity of existing programs in the both public and private sector. This presents many challenges to Delta residents, interested parties, and the state as they try to address the natural resources and community needs. The following is a list of the institutional and resource challenges facing the Conservancy and its service area:

Institutional Challenges	Resource Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of funding 2. Need to determine priorities based on existing staff levels 3. Conflicting objectives and time-lines regarding Delta efforts 4. Conveying clear identity and role of Delta Conservancy 5. Few Californians understand the significance of the Delta 6. As a result of current economy, hiring freezes and state-imposed cost saving measures that impact program 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased urbanization affecting the Conservancy’s service area 2. Increased demand on existing water supplies 3. Maintaining Delta economy in light of changing state and national policies 4. Impaired water quality 5. Adverse effects on land and water species and their habitat, many of which already face declining health and numbers 6. Significant risk in the Delta from floods and potential earthquakes 7. Potential loss of historical and cultural character of communities 8. Adverse impacts of climate change on natural resources, watersheds, and local economies in the Delta.

Consistency With Other Delta Planning Efforts. The Conservancy’s strategic plan must be consistent with at least five other plans (Public Resources Code Sec. 32376). To ensure the success of the Conservancy’s programs, it is likely that the strategic plan also

will be consistent with the general plans and habitat conservation plans of the Delta counties as well as other documents, such as the Delta Protection Commission's economic sustainability plan. Funds provided to the Conservancy to implement ecosystem restoration projects pursuant to the Bay Delta Conservation Plan shall only be used for ecosystem restoration purposes (Public Resources Code Sec. 32360(3)). Meeting these statutory requirements will require a large amount of collaboration and coordination.

The Conservancy will partner with other agencies or be the primary agency carrying out several of the ecosystem restoration or economic sustainability activities proposed under these various plans. Currently, the Conservancy is observing and tracking the development of these various plans, with minimal participation in the policy making elements; as the draft interim strategic plan takes shape, this decision may be revisited.

The five plans with which the Conservancy's draft interim strategic plan must be consistent are:

- Delta Plan, by the Delta Stewardship Council, due January 1, 2012;
- Land Use and Resource Management Plan, by the Delta Protection Commission, updated 2010;
- Central Valley Flood Protection Plan, by the California Department of Water Resources, due by January 1, 2012;
- Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1977; and
- Habitat Management, Preservation and Restoration Plan for the Suisun Marsh (Suisun Marsh Plan), by the Suisun Charter Group. The public review draft was released in November 2010.

The Conservancy's staff is completing an initial inventory of proposed actions under these plans, if available, and will analyze how those proposed actions could fit within the Conservancy's draft interim strategic plan.

Internal Assessment

The SSJDC is mandated to serve a broad range of purposes. To develop effective programs and set priorities, the Conservancy must actively engage with the local governments, Delta residents, state and federal governments, and interested parties to develop partnerships and outreach. Communication with stakeholders is critical for the success of the Conservancy, its mission, and its draft interim strategic plan.

At this nascent stage, the Conservancy is determining where its niche lay, keeping in

mind the principles of building trust and building upon existing efforts to achieve its co-equal responsibilities.

Large area. The Conservancy’s service area includes approximately 1,300 square miles and more than 1,000 miles of levees and waterways in parts of six counties. Headquarters for the Conservancy must be in the legal Delta (as defined in Water Code Section 12220). This creates transportation, communication, and operational challenges. An effective organizational response will require strategic use of the Conservancy’s resources and a commitment to on-going communication with the public and all partners.

Complex Institutional Setting. The SSJDC operates in a complex institutional setting. The Board includes 2 representatives from the Executive Branch (the Natural Resources Secretary and the Department of Finance Director), 2 representatives from the Legislature (non-voting members, one each from the Senate and Assembly), 5 local government representatives (one each from the five Delta Counties), and 4 general public members (2 gubernatorial appointees, and one each from the Senate and Assembly). In addition to the voting and non-voting members, the Board also has 10 liaison advisors from federal, state, and local agencies. (See Governance Section for more detail.)

There are more than 200 entities with some jurisdiction in the Delta, including special districts.

Program Diversity. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act lists 12 program areas for which the Conservancy is responsible. The complexity involved in developing programs for these 12 areas is matched by the complexity of the Delta system itself. Whatever else the Delta may be, it is not a place where a “one size fits all” approach will work.

As the Delta region experiences change—as all regions within California are—it is important for the Conservancy to maintain as much flexibility in its approach as possible. The Conservancy believes that developing partnerships is a good way of maintaining that flexibility while still dealing with its program diversity.

One way the Conservancy sees its partnership role is in receiving and providing grants to other agencies. Should the Water Bond be enacted in 2012, the Conservancy will have millions of dollars to distribute through a grants program. Should the Water Bond not be enacted, the Conservancy still is planning to form partnerships to pursue federal government and private grant funding.

Emphasizing Collaboration and Cooperation. The Conservancy is committed to working collaboratively and cooperatively with the Delta residents, all levels of government,

and a variety of partners, including non-governmental organizations and private land-owners. The SSJDC will consult with city or county governments where grant money will be spent and to coordinate with appropriate state agencies (Public Resources Code Section 32363).

Conservancy's Three Year Organizational Strategic Goals

During the next three years, the SSJDC will work to build an effective infrastructure to carry out its mission, to develop strategies, and to set priorities for decision making on projects and site-specific activities. To carry out its mission, the Conservancy will focus on key organizational areas:

- Create an effective organization
- Implement a balanced program
- Identify funding needs and sources
- Increase knowledge and capacity
- Use and share best available information

Organizational Goal 1: Create an effective organization

Less than a year old, the Conservancy is defining its key purposes, functions, and project goals and developing an organizational structure to support those. It hired staff; adopted rules, administrative regulations, and guidelines for Conservancy operations; and designed organizational management structure. It is in the process of establishing a permanent headquarters site.

The Conservancy's organization structure emphasizes teamwork and flexibility. It addresses the challenges of serving a large and diverse area and is committed to forming partnership with other governmental agencies and interested parties.

The Conservancy does not supersede local or regional efforts; instead, its efforts are to emphasize community interaction and build upon and enhance existing infrastructure.

Strategies to Support Organizational Goal 1

Strategy 1.1: Ensure an open and transparent decision-making process by adopting understandable rules, guidelines, and procedures for the Conservancy's business.

Strategy 1.2: Conduct a robust public outreach and feedback program within the region and in the state's metropolitan areas important to the success of the Conservancy's programs.

Strategy 1.3: Ensure an active role, participating as a key partner in the development and implementation of the Delta Plan and the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan.

Organizational Goal 2: Implement a balanced program

The SSJDC places a priority on projects and activities that provide multiple benefits consistent with program goals. The integration of environmental, economic, and social aspects is encouraged and supported.

The Conservancy will make every effort to, over time, to allocate resources and activities equitably across the Conservancy's service area. Even so, in the initial years of operations, the diversity, complexity, and uniqueness of the Delta may create challenges in achieving this objective. Funding limitations and restrictions may also present challenges in achieving this objective. Compounding that challenge will be a desire to invest in projects that also provide statewide benefits.

The Conservancy will continue to identify efforts and activities with Delta-wide applications and benefit. This may include communication efforts that include information collection and dissemination.

Strategies to Support Organizational Goal 2

Strategy 2.1: Recognize the need to act based on opportunity, available funding, and regional differences and statewide interest.

Strategy 2.2: Continuously refine regional and Delta-wide priority setting processes, consistent with the statute, to guide staff and the Board in decision-making.

Organizational Goal 3: Identify funding needs and sources

Adequate and stable funding sources are essential to fully implement this draft interim strategic plan. The SSJDC understands that funding from any one source may be limited, inconsistent, and restricted in use; governmental funding is contingent upon appropriation and authority to spend granted by either the Legislature or Congress. The Conservancy is dedicated to securing adequate and stable funding from a variety of sources—including grants, endowments, or fees—to carry out its co-equal responsibilities. Priorities established later in this draft interim strategic plan will guide how available funds will be used.

Strategies to Support Organizational Goal 3

Strategy 3.1: Develop and communicate funding needs to the public, partners, and decision makers at all levels.

Strategy 3.2: Leverage and improve funding options and opportunities by identifying and communicating potential funding sources to those engaged in project activities consistent with the Conservancy's mission.

Strategy 3.3: Identify and secure additional opportunities for stable funding sources for the Conservancy.

Organizational Goal 4: Increase knowledge and capacity

The Delta communities have a rich history of self-sufficiency and resourcefulness. Many local activities, consistent with the Conservancy's mission, are underway. The Conservancy will build upon these efforts and assist communities in building and creating their capacity to complete their efforts by providing information, technical assistance, financial, or other resources.

The Conservancy recognizes that its goals and activities must be flexible to address the wide variety of regional issues and concerns, and to adapt to new information or situations. Education efforts, demonstration projects, and research and monitoring activities designed to increase knowledge will continue to be encouraged and supported.

Strategies to Support Organization Goal 4

Strategy 4.1: Determine existing and potential regional and community education, shared learning, and research projects that the Conservancy can support and enhance.

Strategy 4.2: Assist Delta communities in identifying demonstration projects and com-

munication needs (e.g., grant opportunities) and develop partnerships to address those needs and resolve issues.

Strategy 4.3: Assist, in an advisory capacity, Delta communities on achieving, obtaining necessary information, or resolving conflicts for their habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans.

Organizational Goal 5: Use and share best available information

The SSJDC will base its decisions on the best available information by engaging compiling, synthesizing, analyzing, and sharing existing data.

Numerous governmental agencies, non-governmental entities, educational institutions, and individuals develop and maintain information that could inform the Conservancy's decision making. In many instances, this information is not readily available to others. The Conservancy will collaborate with these entities to determine information needs and define ways to make the best available information easily available to interested parties.

The Conservancy will identify and incorporate as much existing data as possible into its information collection and dissemination efforts. The Conservancy also proposes to engage community leaders and others in defining information priorities, data gaps, and dissemination methods.

To promote the Delta and the Conservancy's programs, the Conservancy will make information as widely available as possible, using multiple avenues ranging from personal contact to Internet features to other emerging technologies.

Strategies to Support Organizational Goal 5

Strategy 5.1: Identify sources of existing information relevant to the Conservancy's mission.

Strategy 5.2: Assess and share with partners information to promote decision-making that is consistent with the Conservancy's mission.

Conservancy's Three Year Program Goals

[Staff is providing outlines for two ways of approaching program goals. Option 1 groups the items in Public Resources Code Section 32322 under four overarching goals. Option 2 lists as individual goals the items found in Section 32322.]

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy Act charged the program with two co-equal responsibilities—ecosystem restoration and economic sustainability in the Delta. These two co-equal responsibilities were further delineated into 12 program areas; these 12 program areas form the basis for the Conservancy's goals.

Option 1:

Goal 32320(a): Act as a primary state agency to implement ecosystem restoration in the Delta.

Objectives:

- Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration
- Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans (NCCPs)
- Facilitate take protections and safe harbor agreements for adjacent landowners and local public agencies
- Identify and secure adequate funding to carry out these objectives

Strategies:

Goal 32320(b): Support efforts that advance and protect the economic well-being of Delta residents.

Objectives:

- Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes
- Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation
- Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's programs
- Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources
- Identify and secure adequate funding to carry out these objectives

Strategies:

Goal C: Inform, educate, and advocate for the Delta as a unique natural and significant resource

Objectives:

- Promote environmental education through grant funding
- Serve as a Delta advocate before the Legislature and Congress
- Provide outreach to protect and improve water quality
- Build trust with Delta residents
- Identify and secure adequate funding to carry out these objectives

Strategies:

Goal D: Identify and establish partnerships with interested parties to further the Conservancy's mission.

Objectives

- Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission
- Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission
- Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed
- Identify and secure adequate funding to carry out these objectives

Strategies:

Option 2:

Program Goal 1: Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 1

Strategy 1.1:

Strategy 1.2

Program Goal 2: Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 2

Strategy 2.1:

Strategy 2.2:

Program Goal 3: Provide increased opportunities for tourism and recreation

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 3

Strategy 3.1:

Strategy 3.2:

Program Goal 4: Promote Delta legacy communities and economic vitality in the Delta in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 4:

Strategy 4.1:

Strategy 4.2:

Program Goal 5: Increase the resilience of the Delta to the effects of natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, in coordination with the Delta Protection Commission

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 5:

Strategy 5.1:

Strategy 5.2:

Program Goal 6: Protect and improve water quality

[description of what this goal means]

Strategy to Support Program Goal 6:

Strategy 6.1:

Strategy 6.2:

Program Goal 7: Assist the Delta regional economy through the operation of the Conservancy's programs

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 7:

Strategy 7.1:

Strategy 7.2:

Program Goal 8: Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 8:

Strategy 8.1:

Strategy 8.2:

Program Goal 9: Protect, conserve, and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical, and living resources

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 9:

Strategy 9.1:

Strategy 9.2:

Program Goal 10: Assist local entities in the implementation of their habitat conservation plans (HCPs) and natural community conservation plans (NCCPs)

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 10:

Strategy 10.1:

Strategy 10.2:

Program Goal 11: Facilitate take protections and safe harbor agreements for adjacent landowners and local public agencies

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 11:

Strategy 11.1:

Strategy 11.2:

Program Goal 12: Promote environmental education

[description of what this goal means]

Strategies to Support Program Goal 12:

Strategy 12.1:

Strategy 12.2:

Next Steps

This draft interim strategic plan is meant to begin the conversation about the role of the Conservancy in the larger Delta context, and its strategies to achieve its co-equal responsibilities. Conservancy staff anticipates several versions of this draft interim plan before a final plan is adopted by the Board. Once the goals and strategies are determined, the next step is to identify and develop performance measures and criteria by which to judge the Conservancy's achievements.

Acknowledgements

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

The Strategic Plan Subcommittee for its direction and insights in developing this plan. The subcommittee members are: Mike Eaton, chair; Chuck Bonham, Steve Chappell, Robin Kulakow, Jim Provenza, and Ken Vogel.

The Conservancy also acknowledges the support and help of Grace Koch, deputy director of Strategic Planning with the Department of General Services; and Dale Hoffman-Florke, deputy director at the Department of Water Resources and Dean Messer, chief of the Division of Environmental Services in DWR.

[Add thanks to the executive directors and staff from other conservancies who met with us to discuss their experiences in starting up conservancies.]

[Add thanks and photo credit.]

Glossary

Appendices:

Appendix A: full text of SBX 7-1

Appendix B: etc.