

# DELTA CONSERVATION FRAMEWORK

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## September 21, 2016 Workshop Summary

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The following provides a summary of the Delta Conservation Framework (Framework) workshop held on September 21, 2016. The workshop focused on Delta conservation topics, goals and implementation strategies.

### **Conservation Topics and Goals**

The main conservation topics of 1) conservation of ecosystem function and 2) integration of conservation with Delta community goals were accepted. In general, workshop participants commented that there were too many subtopics and too many associated goals, with considerable overlap and redundancy. Participants suggested consolidating the topics and goal statements. Participants also noted some key missing topics and some potentially conflicting goals. Specific comments included:

- Consider 4-5 overarching subtopics such as: environmental flows and water quality; habitat enhancement; governance/permitting streamline; and community engagement.
- Focus on, and integrate with, Delta community goals and values (e.g. Delta as place).
- Focus on natural processes. Don't over-focus on native species.
- Address water flows. Consolidate with water quality.
- Address food web and stressors (natural and human).
- Address habitat connectivity.
- Address how we can learn lessons from past projects and improve information exchange between agencies, NGOs and university researchers.
- Combine landscape dynamics, climate change, ecosystem evolution, sea-level rise and salinity intrusion.
- Potentially conflicting goals include: managing invasive species, water quality and native species habitat; and increasing tidal marsh habitat for fish at expense of reptiles and migratory birds.
- Consider institutional improvements to address permitting challenges and other regulatory issues.
- Consider public access (direct and managed).
- Enhance flood compatible agriculture.
- Manage aquatic weeds to enhance boating access.
- Engage landowners and provide local benefits, which will help with implementation.
- Provide public education workshops and increase awareness. Make information more accessible to interested parties/landowners.

## Comments on Implementation Strategies

Workshop participants struggled with identifying implementation strategies in the absence of a revised, consolidated set of topics and goals. Participants noted that many of the draft goals read like strategies, and some of the strategies read like goals. It was suggested that the plan should contain less goals and more strategies, and that some of the draft goal statements could be converted to strategies. Specific implementation strategies identified during the workshop included:

- Promoting conservation-oriented branding (e.g. “bird friendly” rice).
- Incentivizing certain practices.
- Pursuing agricultural and conservation easements and promoting wildlife friendly farming practices (see examples).
- Focusing on publicly owned lands and willing landowners.
- Supporting, and possibly expanding existing programs.
- Learning from successful projects (including existing regional plans) and adapting as you learn.
- Pursuing bulk mitigation sites to serve mitigation needs for multiple related projects (region-wide projects) that can lead to larger continuous habitat.
- Pursuing mandates to address permitting and limitations in agency staffing (i.e. acknowledge permitting challenges, but don’t try to provide specific remedies in this plan).
- Integrating conservation planning with community goals.
- Promoting education (e.g., tours, school programs and lectures). For example, see Yolo Basin Foundation: citizen science and volunteers.
- Working with the legislature to secure adequate dedicated, and sustained funding, including funding for long-term monitoring and O&M
- Focusing on public lands first.
- Working at the local government level - tapping existing boards.
- Using the Delta Conservation Framework as a clearinghouse for mitigation credits.
- Promoting green infrastructure to address climate change.
- Considering “extreme or catastrophic event-based change” in planning processes (example: climate change adaptation).
- Relying on regional planning processes for implementation.
- Leveraging existing programs and research.
- Providing analyses of costs and benefits over longer time-scales. For example, setback levees are expensive, but are a more effective form of flood protection long-term that also provides habitat value (i.e. the long-term benefits outweigh the initial high cost).
- Focusing on win-win opportunities and working together to address conflicts.
- Obtaining federal funding.
- Providing funding to off-set environmental mitigation costs.
- Incorporating the good neighbor checklist.

- Forging public-private partnerships.
- Fostering local ownership and building local support.

### **Examples of Existing Programs and Strategies**

The following were mentioned by workshop participants as good examples of successful programs and/or strategies:

- Wildlife friendly farming: Yolo RCD work in Yolo Bypass; NRCS' Waterbird Habitat Enhancement Program (WHEP); CV Joint Venture; Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area.
- Incentives: Central Valley Habitat Exchange.
- Public/private partnerships: mitigation banking.
- Delta Levees projects: strategies to integrate conservation and flood protection. DWR provides special funding to support environmental requirements associated with the levee projects.
- Lindsey Slough Habitat Enhancement Project
- Yolo Basin Foundation: citizen science and volunteers for long-term funding
- Delta Protection Commission - outreach to public and support for ongoing research for management of Delta communities and conservation.
- Resource conservation districts: ongoing programs to fund wildlife friendly agriculture.
- Everglades

**List of Workshop 2 Participants:**

| <b>First</b> | <b>Last</b> | <b>Organization</b>   |
|--------------|-------------|---|
| Judy         | Bendix      | Mosaic Associates   |
| Charlotte    | Biggs       | DWR   |
| Amanda       | Bohl        | Delta Stewardship Council                                   |
| Megan        | Brooks      | Delta Stewardship Council                                   |
| Scott        | Cantrell    | DFW - WB  |
| Ryan (David) | Carrothers  | DFW – Region 3  |
| Youchen      | Chao        | DWR   |
| Jessica      | Davenport   | Delta Stewardship Council                                   |
| Michael      | Dunphy      | US Fish and Wildlife Service - Central Valley Joint Venture |
| Sakura       | Evans       | DFW - IEP   |
| Terri        | Gaines      | DWR   |
| Letitia      | Grenier     | San Francisco Estuary Institute                             |
| Judah        | Grossman    | Nature Conservancy  |
| Aaron        | Haiman      | Delta Conservancy   |
| Daniel       | Huang       | Delta Stewardship Council                                   |
| Campbell     | Ingram      | Delta Conservancy   |
| Brooke       | Jacobs      | DFW - WB  |
| Laura        | Jensen      | Delta Conservancy   |
| Alejo        | Kraus Polk  | UC Davis  |
| Robin        | Kulakow     | Yolo Basin Foundation                                       |
| Ben          | Nelson      | USBR  |
| Martha       | Ozonoff     | Yolo Basin Foundation                                       |
| Anitra       | Pawley      | DWR   |
| Michael      | Perrone     | DWR   |
| Shelley      | Phillips    | DWR   |
| Rogene       | Reynolds    | South Delta Resident  |
| Erik         | Ringelberg  | Freshwater Trust  |
| Erik         | Ringelberg  | The Freshwater Trust  |
| Blake        | Roberts     | Delta Protection Commission                                 |
| Bjarni       | Serup       | DFW - WB  |
| Stacy        | Sherman     | DFW - IEP   |
| Christina    | Sloop       | DFW -WB   |
| Khara        | Strum       | Audubon   |
| Erik         | Vink        | Delta Protection Commission                                 |
| Greg         | Yarris      | US Fish and Wildlife Service - Central Valley Joint Venture |