

# Delta Conservation Framework

Public Review Workshop 2, November 16, 2017, Walnut Grove, CA. | 6:00 – 8:00 pm

## Meeting Overview

This workshop was the second of two public input sessions, convened by the Delta Conservancy, on the Department of Fish & Wildlife’s Delta Conservation Framework. This Framework is the culmination of six workshops and includes a vision for conversation in the Delta, along with Goals, Strategies and Objectives to guide planning efforts around Conservation in the Delta.

### Meeting Desired Results

1. Seek stakeholder feedback on the public draft of the Delta Conservation Framework.
2. Encourage a dialogue among the varied Delta stakeholders that can be continued into the future

**Speakers:** Campbell Ingram, Delta Conservancy; Carl Wilcox, Department of Fish & Wildlife, and Brooke Jacobs, Department of Fish & Wildlife. Genevieve Taylor, Ag Innovations facilitated the meeting.

### Meeting Guidelines

1. Listen Courteously
2. Speak Candidly and Concisely
3. Suspend Certainty
4. Be Present

### Agenda

6:00 pm	Welcome, Overview & Update to the Framework
6:35 pm	Q&A
7:15 pm	Group Input Session
7:55 pm	Wrap up and Close

**Who attended:** Ten participants joined the conversation this evening, and gave their perspective on stakeholder engagement, the concept of Regional Planning Partnerships, and the content of the Framework itself. Below are results from the evening.

**Acknowledgements:** Thank you to Christina Sloop, primary author of the Framework at the Department of Fish & Wildlife, and to Craig Wilson, Department of Water Resources, and Debra Kustic, Delta Conservancy who supported the facilitation that evening.

## Meeting Highlights

1. The group reviewed and gave feedback on the vision, goals, stakeholder engagement, and the Regional Collaboration Partnerships concept. There was a sense of careful optimism in the group; the group spoke frankly about their concerns but acknowledged that the approach of locally driven collaboration is a significant shift in past state efforts around conservation.
2. Feedback was given on how to increase participation at a local level, including working with local associations and increasing email reminders.
3. Major questions included - who could lead the regional partnerships, who would fund these efforts, and who would move this forward in the future?

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4. Major recommendations included: an affirmation that locally driven – but inclusive – is a critical way to move forward; that multi-benefits that span beyond conservation are important in the project implementation; and that the community will have to “wait and see” to see if future interactions are different from past ones.

## Meeting Results

### Welcome from Campbell Ingram, Delta Conservancy

- Delta Conservancy is intended to be lead agency for restoration and economic development in Delta. The Delta Conservation Framework (Framework) is important as a valuable contribution to a better-shared understanding of how we restore ecological function. A few things to keep in mind:
  - We all benefit from a healthy and functional ecosystem; locals reminisce about what things used to be like, whether they are farmers or residents
  - When our ecosystem declines, regulations increase to prevent extinction of Delta Smelt or salmon
  - CA WaterFix is apparently moving forward on it’s own track, and presents challenges for having this conversation. The hope for tonight is that we can set that aside to the extent possible and focus on the ecosystem’s health with or without the tunnels project.
  - The Framework represents two significant changes in how we have done things in the past. 1) a focus on strong science to help understand how we should do restoration effectively, and 2) a clear recognition that if we are going to be successful, local involvement is key. The people who are affected must be at the table.

### Presentation from Carl Wilcox and Brooke Jacobs, Department of Fish & Wildlife

The full slideshow can be at: <http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=152468>. Main points covered include:

- Efforts to date on stakeholder outreach and actual participation
- An overview of the 2016 Framework Workshop Series and how it impacted the development of the Framework
- A review of the basic tenets of the Framework, the layout of the document, including its vision, goals, and appendix. The appendix provides a multitude of resources for local entities to use as they begin their own planning process.
- A description of Regional Conservation Planning Partnerships. Seven areas have been identified for Regional Conservation Planning Partnerships, including Suisun Marsh, Yolo Bypass, Cache Slough Complex, Central Delta Corridor Partnership, North Delta, South Delta, and West Delta.
- **The path forward:** The Framework is intended to be a high level, landscape scale framework that informs but does not dictate the Regional Conservation Planning Partnerships. These partnerships are intended to include as collaborative partners the Delta community, agriculture, local agencies, and private landowners alongside the federal and state agencies (including water and flood management) who are required to work in the Delta.

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## Community Input

The group was provided with an overview of the Framework in the form of Section Abstracts and discussion questions (available at: <http://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=152470>), with an invitation to review and offer additional feedback by email.

The group offered feedback on a variety of key questions.

## What are additional strategies for public engagement?

- The group reviewed the slide below on the efforts to date; the Department of Fish & Wildlife discussed how they had responded to feedback and guidance from the community in previous workshops.

The group gave the following recommendations:

1. Increase email outreach on Delta Protection Committee (DPC)
2. Include Outreach to Delta Chamber of Commerce, Restore the Delta, Fishing Associations and motor boat association groups

# Stakeholder Outreach

- ▶ **Email announcements/invitations**
  - ▶ Personal email invitations
  - ▶ Delta Restoration Network listserv
  - ▶ Delta Stewardship Council listserv
  - ▶ Delta Protection Commission listserv
- ▶ **Fliers distributed throughout Delta**
- ▶ **Local champions**
- ▶ **Additional presentations given**
  - ▶ Delta Counties Coalition
  - ▶ Central Valley Joint Venture Management Board
  - ▶ Delta Levees Habitat Advisory Committee
  - ▶ Delta Stewardship Council
  - ▶ Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee
  - ▶ Delta Protection Commission
  - ▶ Delta Protection Advisory Committee



Photo: C. Sloop

## Question & Answer with Panelists

After the presentation, every participant was invited to ask questions and give comments directly to the panelists. Panelists included: Campbell Ingram, Delta Conservancy; Carl Wilcox, Department of Fish & Wildlife, and Brooke Jacobs, Department of Fish & Wildlife; Christina Sloop, Department of Fish & Wildlife.

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*Participant Question:* Are the goals too ambitious?

- *Panelist Answer:*
  - Many goals support and align with already existing, current efforts (such as initiatives by the Delta Protection Commission or Delta Conservancy etc.)
  - Goals are intended to help regions do their planning in concert with state and federal agencies
  - *Participant Concern:* Without a champion, this will not happen. It must be tied to local motivations.

*Participant Question:* Are there acreage targets?

- *Panelist Answer:* No. That needs to be determined at regional scale

*Participant Question:* How does this fit (or not) into Bay Delta Conservation Plan?

- *Panelist Answer:* The BDCP should serve as a resource of technical information that could support, alongside other sources of information, conservation planning in the Delta. However, the Framework does not advocate for pulling objectives or acreage targets from the BDCP.

*Participant Question:* Governance? Who leads the various Regional Partnerships? Can we do this ourselves, at the local level? How is it governed? Who has authority to make decisions?

- *Panelist Answer:*
  - Any approach has to include agencies, because we are all part of the puzzle. Has to be grounded in reality. Asking only locals to participate in regional collaboration is not collaboration – we have to include all of us.
  - Recommend avoiding governance early on to enable open discussion and collective thinking – will need governance later on as regional processes become more specific on a parcel or project scale.

*Participant Question:* You have referred to “we”; who is the “we”?

*Panelist Answer:*

- In Cache Slough – all partners involved. The “we” is the Delta community, agriculture, local agencies, and private landowners alongside the federal and state agencies (including water and flood management) who are required to work in the Delta.

*Participant Question:* Who is going to own this? How is it rolled out?

*Participant Answer:*

- It is currently authored by the Department of Fish and Wildlife with several key collaborators:
  - Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
  - Delta Stewardship Council
  - Delta Science Program

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- Department of Water Resources
- California Natural Resources Agency

*Participant Question:* Who will implement Regional Plans? Who will have the power?

*Panelist Answer:*

- It can be locals who drive the approach to developing plans. Ultimate implementation depends on support of locals to state support and funding to implement.
- The Paradise Cut project in the South Delta was put forth as an example of a locally driven multi-benefit flood project that has successfully pulled in relevant agencies and state funding support for implementation.
- Conservancy's role is to insure "we" represents all interests with a stake

*Participant Question:* Once the DCF is final – What is CDFW's commitment to following through and supporting implementation?

*Panelist Answer:*

- The DCF is the California Natural Resources Agency's document and is therefore broader than CDFW
- Document helps to identify where and who needs resources to implement actions and provides guidance
- This represents an "Operating system" upgrade, and changes how decisions are made

*Participant Question:* What is the plan for 5-year updates?

- *Panelist Answer:* The DCF updates will go along with the Delta Plan Ecosystem updates.

### Group Input Session: Feedback on Framework

During the group input session, the group was also asked for feedback on the Framework. Every participant made several contributions to the discussion.

#### ***CDFW Question 1: What are the concerns and opportunities do you see for the Framework?***

*Concern:* Will the DCF be adopted into regulation by State entities and they will become the "we" and discount local partnership interests?

- Could locals run meetings? – as long as all interests are invited and involved, it is best if meetings are led by locals.
- "We" is not always same entities – varies among regions.

*Concern:* Lack of government funding leaves landowners with the burden of conservation without associated benefits – agencies bring impacts

#### ***CDFW Question 2: What would give you as a community confidence that this could work?***

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Answer: We would need to see benefits, need to see financial support for the partnerships and for implementation

**CDFW Question 3: How do we solicit more local interests/involvement?**

- Meetings are too extensive
- Nothing ever happens as result
- Not confident that things would change. They haven't changed in the past.
- Are all partners equal? US Army Corps seems to have vision for Delta, which trumps local interests
- Creating equal partnerships is the only way to make this work
- A partnership approach to flood planning works better for example, the upper Yolo Bypass partnership is working better
- Local interest & leadership can move needle – flood, infrastructure improvements etc, pair with conservation efforts for win-win
- Focused projects within regions can be useful – Need to facilitate efforts overall
- Can provide regulatory certainty; financial support; multi-benefit
- Encourage using this approach to develop sustainable plans

**Final Feedback**

*Each participant was asked to give any final thoughts on the Framework as the meeting wrapped up.*

- Pleased to see goal of local engagement moved up front in the Framework – keep that focus!
- Challenge in moving from planning to implementation
- Regional Partnerships – progress happens when people come together – needs met to greatest extent possible
- Repairing trust is needed and vital to moving forward
- Understanding how people fit into Delta ecosystems is important
- Continued focus from CDFW important to making the ideas in the Framework happen
- Make clear to locals – this is an opportunity to participate from ground up & not be dictated to
- I cringe at the term Adaptive Management; whenever it is used, there are insufficient funds allocated over the long-term – as a result, people forget about when a project is done and it doesn't happen = plan to make project plans
- What is the genesis of the Framework? Recommend adding history to the document
- Good process = good results
- EcoRestore is BiOp driven
  - How does the DCF help to go beyond that?
  - DCF is the long term extension of EcoRestore which includes both BiOp projects and grant funded projects
- Win-win-win proposal – Conservation must be win-win-win!
  - French National Parks – good example to examine in the context of Delta conservation
- Do carbon easements exist? Carbon protocol – Central Valley Habitat Exchange

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What the organizers are taking away from this conversation:

- Local leadership is a good idea
- We need to look for the Win-win-win of multi-benefits
- Continued leadership and consistent presence is helpful.
- The community will have to wait and see. But there are “tendrils of hope” with this collaborative approach.

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