

Delta Habitat Projects Accomplishments

Delta Habitat Projects

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is the hub of the state's water supply system.

It is a unique and valuable estuary, home to threatened and endangered species; it supplies municipal and industrial water to 25 million people and irrigates more than 7 million acres of the most productive agricultural land in the nation. Land within the Delta supports agriculture, recreation and tourism; and more than 500,000 people call the Delta home.

The Delta is also an ecosystem in crisis. Under Governor Schwarzenegger's leadership, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) has implemented many projects and initiatives aimed at restoring the ecosystem and by creating higher quality habitat for native species.



Dutch Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Project - The Dutch Slough Tidal Marsh Restoration Project, is a cooperative partnership between Department of Water Resources (DWR) and other State, federal, and local agencies.

The project will restore tidal marsh and other native habitats to 1,166 acres of DWR-owned land in eastern Contra Costa County near Oakley. Restored habitats are anticipated to benefit many terrestrial and aquatic species in the Delta. Because it will restore the natural hydrology and increase nutrients in the Delta's aquatic food chain, the project is expected to provide important benefits to the larger Delta ecosystem. Additionally, the project will provide recreational benefits including public access through more than four miles of trails, shoreline access, and a public park that will be developed by the City of Oakley on 55 acres adjacent to the restoration project.

SBx7 1, part of the Governor's 2009 Comprehensive Water Package, directs DWR to "assist in implementing early action ecosystem restoration projects, including....Dutch Slough tidal marsh restoration." The project funds will come from Proposition 84, the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, approved by the voters in November 2006.

As of March 30, 2010, DWR has certified and approved the Project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and project construction is anticipated to begin in 2011.

Liberty Island Studies - Liberty Island is an inundated island encompassing 5,209 acres in the northern Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. It has been flooded since 1998 when levees were breached during high water flows and the levees were not repaired by the landowners. Future restoration plans for Liberty Island are envisioned to utilize passive approaches that would allow wetland and riparian vegetation to establish naturally. Restoration may also include:

- Creating additional breaches in the levee filling agricultural water delivery and drainage ditches,
- Leveling an existing road bisecting the property, and
- Excavating meandering sloughs to improve habitat quality and native fish access and to prevent fish stranding.

Liberty Island already supports significant existing wildlife and has outstanding potential for restoration, floodplain management, and endangered species recovery.

Acquisition of Prospect Island by DWR - Prospect Island is one of three Delta Islands which the Draft Bay Delta Conservation Strategy has specified for early implementation. The island is located in the northwestern part of the Delta. The project will entail breaching the Prospect Island levees to restore tidal marsh, open water habitat, and some upland/riparian habitat. Prospect Island offers a unique opportunity for restoration due to comparatively little subsidence, resulting in elevations in the island interior that are assumed suitable for supporting tidal wetlands (pending more specific data). DWR acquired the northern part of Prospect Island from the federal General Services Administration in January 2010 and is in discussion with the Port of West Sacramento regarding the incorporation of their property into the project.

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