

# **Delta Water Platform**

## **Approved by Contra Costa County**

### **Board of Supervisors**

#### **May 13, 2014**

#### **Introduction**

#### **A healthy Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is key to our physical, societal and economic health**

A healthy, vibrant Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Estuary is closely tied to the physical, societal and economic health of those who live, work and recreate in the San Francisco Bay-Delta region and throughout much of the state. The eastern portion of Contra Costa County is located within the Delta and the County's entire northern border is bounded by waterfront that flows from the Delta to the Bay. Thus, Contra Costa County lies at the heart of the Bay-Delta region and the future of this nationally significant resource substantially influences the future of the County. Restoring the health of the Delta protects the Bay which is linked to the long term success of the County as a whole.

A healthy Delta requires sufficient water supply of good quality along with habitat for healthy populations of fish and other native aquatic, terrestrial and avian species, both migratory and year-round. A healthy Delta would protect people and property (through strong levees, comprehensive emergency response and a water supply of good quality). A healthy Delta would promote economic health of the region and sustain agriculture (managed for habitat and food production), recreation activities (recreational fishing, boating, camping, hiking) and commerce (industry, ports, shipping and commercial fishing). Reestablishing healthy fish populations in the Delta would also mean current restrictions on water diversions could be relaxed resulting in improved water supply reliability.

To date, the health of the Delta has not been a priority, given the state's increasing thirst for water. It is becoming increasingly apparent that an ailing Delta is detrimental to our health, safety and welfare. All indicators of a healthy Delta show significant decline. It is imperative to act quickly to improve the health of the Delta, before irreparable harm is done.

The Delta provides water for millions of people and thousands of acres of agriculture. However, without continued improvements to the Delta ecosystem this resource finds itself in jeopardy and today's operational practices are not sustainable. To that end, the County is proactive in its advocacy for developing new strategies that take water from the Delta when water is in surplus to the environmental, municipal and agricultural needs of those who reside in the Delta.

Contra Costa County has developed this Delta Water Platform to identify and promote activities and policy positions that support the creation of a healthy Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Contra Costa County will use this Platform to guide its own actions and advocacy in other public venues regarding the future of the Delta.

All Californians have a stake in our water future. These actions set us on a path toward reliability, restoration and resilience in California water. California's impending water crisis

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requires that we adapt to this “new normal” and recapture California’s resource management leadership and our economic and environmental resilience and reliability. There are no silver bullets or single projects that will “fix the problem.” We must have a portfolio of actions to comprehensively address the challenges this state faces. Some actions must be taken immediately to address the current drought crisis and inadequate safe drinking water. Additionally, over the next five years we must address fundamental changes in our approach to water resource management and be prepared for change.

The Delta Water Platform is one tool that will allow the County to effectively advocate our views moving forward.

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*These policies are not ordered based on priority; the numerical order is used solely for the intention of organizing the subject categories and policies in this document for reference.*

To protect the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta from various detrimental forces that are affecting its health and resources, it is the policy of Contra Costa County to support implementation of projects and actions that will help improve the Delta ecosystem and the economic conditions of the Delta.

Contra Costa County Delta Water Platform

1. Support short term actions to be implemented immediately
2. Conveyance
3. Water quality, water quantity and Delta outflow
4. Water storage
5. Water conservation
6. Water rights and legislative protections
7. Flood protection/floodplain management
8. Levee restoration
9. Emergency response
10. Protect and restore the Delta ecosystem
11. Protect and restore the Bay ecosystem through increased outflow from the Delta
12. Controlling aquatic invasive plant species
13. San Luis drain/Grasslands bypass
14. San Joaquin River Restoration Program
15. Climate change
16. Regional self-sufficiency
17. Governance
18. Delta Counties Coalition
19. San Francisco to Stockton Deep Water Ship Channel
20. California Water Bond

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**1. Support Short Term Actions to be implemented immediately**

- a. Support and advocate for immediate implementation of specific short-term actions to improve the ecosystem, water quality, and the fishery. These projects/actions include:**
- i. western and central Delta levee improvements.
  - ii. water quality and fishery improvements.
  - iii. additional and improved fish screens for all Delta diversions including both south Delta export locations.
  - iv. reversing subsidence on Delta islands.
  - v. habitat improvement projects.
  - vi. emergency response planning.
  - vii. Knightsen Biofilter Project, a wetland restoration and flood management project that will benefit threatened species and their habitats while also reducing flood risks in the Knightsen area (this project is on the list of high priority projects generated by the Coalition to Support Delta Projects)
  - viii. Marsh Creek Mercury Mine Remediation Project, a project that will reduce mercury pollution into Marsh Creek and the Delta from an abandoned mine (this project is on the list of high priority projects generated by the Coalition to Support Delta Projects)
- b. Continue active participation in the Coalition to Support Delta Projects and the San Joaquin Valley Partnership.**

**2. Conveyance**

- a. Support continued through-Delta conveyance.**
- b. Improve Delta levees and channels to allow continued diversion of water at the south Delta export pumps.**
- c. Support the “common Delta pool” doctrine.**
- d. Support study of additional credible alternative conveyance strategies (e.g. Dual Conveyance) that also incorporate additional storage to enable increased diversion of water during periods of high outflow when impacts will be minimized.**
- e. Oppose fully isolated conveyance alternatives.**

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**f. Proposed projects and programs must help restore the whole San Francisco Bay-Delta system, including San Francisco Bay.**

- i. The ecosystem health of San Francisco Bay has a direct effect on anadromous fish in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems and resident Delta fish species.
- ii. Ensure adequate Delta outflows to San Francisco Bay to support fisheries, wildlife, habitat, water quality and other beneficial uses.

**g. The following key planning issues must be addressed in a timely manner, otherwise the County will maintain its opposing position regarding Isolated Water Conveyance Facilities:**

- i. Any new conveyance facilities must achieve both co-equal goals, consistent with the Delta Reform Act of 2009.
- ii. Maintain/restore Delta water quality and supply for existing Delta area water users.
- iii. Ensure adequate inflows to the Delta and outflows to the Bay for ecosystem health.
- iv. Advocate for reduced dry-month export scenarios in new (proposed) conveyance plans and programs. [i.e. support exporting water in very wet months and exporting less water in average and drier months]
- v. Incorporate regional self-sufficiency as part of any new water supply system. Each region needs to maximize conservation and reuse, implement storage options and multi-benefits stormwater projects, and consider desalination to help relieve stress on the Delta.
- vi. Delta ecosystem improvements and through-Delta conveyance improvements need to be implemented before an isolated facility is substantively planned, designed, and/or constructed.
- vii. Any isolated facility, and mitigation related to an isolated facility, need to be paid for by the direct beneficiaries rather than by the taxpayers.
- viii. Protections for and improvements to the Delta ecosystem, fisheries, water quality, water supply, and levees need to be incorporated into any new water management plans.
- ix. Successful management of conveyance requires a robust Governance structure that includes a seat at the table for locally affected Counties, see Policy 17. b

*The Delta provides a common resource, including fresh water supply for all Delta water users, and all those whose actions have an impact on the Delta environment share in the obligation to restore, maintain and protect Delta resources, including water supplies, water quality, levees, and natural habitat.*

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*The Bay-Delta Estuary is adversely affected by lack of water in the system (i.e. high volume exports, especially during dry years), and the amount of exports is at least partially responsible for the recent collapse of the Delta ecosystem. Federal fishery scientists have determined Delta outflows need to be increased during the Fall months (decreased Fall X2), rather than decreased. Current proposals include creating a saline (tidal) ecological environment for the western Delta or with “variable” water quality (brackish/saltwater with fresh flow pulses) in place of the current freshwater regime. Some studies are illustrating a conflict between a higher water quality standard needed for human consumption and the optimal water quality for ecosystem health, with its myriad of micro-organisms. This could create a conflict for western Delta water users.*

*Currently the Draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan, BDCP and State Water Resources Control Board efforts are focused on flows and water quality within the statutory Delta (California Water Code Section 12220) and Suisun Bay. However, anadromous fish species must pass through San Pablo and central San Francisco Bays to reach the ocean, and longfin smelt, a resident species of concern, spends time in the rest of San Francisco Bay, including South San Francisco Bay. Actions to restore threatened and endangered fish species also need to include increased flows and improved water quality in all of San Francisco Bay, not just the Delta.*

*The Draft Bay Delta Conservation Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report/Statement acknowledge the proposed isolated facilities would significantly degrade water quality in the Delta. The degradation of water quality is attributed to the proposed isolated water conveyance scenarios because diverters would be taking water upstream of most of the Delta, eliminating the incentive for the exporters to preserve Delta water quality. This is contrary to the concept of the “common Delta pool” principle where all diverters of Delta water have the motivation to protect the Delta and diverters from the upstream have less interest in maintaining the Delta infrastructure, water quality and ecosystem habitat. The BDCP proposal would also compromise Delta water quality by removing significant amounts of high quality Sacramento River water and leaving increased amounts of contaminated San Joaquin River water in the system. The degree of this adverse water quality impact is dependent on a number of factors including amount of exports, when and where water is taken, capacity etc.*

*The BDCP is proposing a dual conveyance facility, which would continue some established use of through-Delta conveyance, and significantly degrade water quality in the Delta. The current BDCP proposal is inadequate because it does not include additional storage to allow more water to be captured during wetter months (and less during dry months). With storage the BDCP might have the potential to improve operational flexibility to meet both ecosystem and water supply needs, (i.e., achieve both co-equal goals). The current BDCP proposed project includes expansion of Clifton Court Forebay in Contra Costa County and disposal of tunnel muck in the County.*

### **3. Water Quality, Water Quantity and Delta Outflow**

- a. Support efforts to protect and improve water quality, water quantity and Delta outflow.**

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- b. Advocate for state and federal projects and legislation that protect and improve Delta water quality consistent with the Delta Reform Act of 2009 and that any adverse water quality impacts, be eliminated or fully mitigated.**
- c. Oppose proposals that allow or cause increased salinity in the western, central and southern Delta unless impacts are fully mitigated.**
- d. Seek guarantees of adequate flows for a healthy Delta. Without solutions involving new storage, this will require a permanent reduction in average exports. Use thresholds for healthy fish populations as an indicator to identify adequate flows.**
- e. Continue to request that the State Water Project and Central Valley Project implement projects and operational criteria that meet the Delta Reform Act of 2009 requirement to reduce reliance on the Delta in meeting California's future water supply needs.**
- f. Seek assurances that the Bay-Delta Conservation Plan and operations of the State Water Project and Central Valley Project include actions that reverse, not exacerbate, the decline of the Delta ecosystem and collapse of the fishery and achieve the co-equal goals.**
- g. Require that operational decisions regarding water quality, water quantity, and Delta outflows must be based on a system wide, estuary wide analysis (including the Delta and San Francisco Bay).**

*The adverse impacts of pollutant loading in Delta waters in and around the County have been exacerbated by reduced Delta outflows. The isolated conveyance facility currently proposed as part of the BDCP will further increase pollutant concentrations by reducing freshwater inflows to the Delta.*

*Increased pollutant concentrations in the Delta will likely lead to modification of water quality standards in County permits (e.g. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System and Total Maximum Daily Limits) for County creeks and streams that discharge into the Delta. This will significantly increase the cost for permit compliance.*

#### **4. Water Storage**

- a. Support multi-purpose storage options that incorporate water supply, flood control, surface water and groundwater storage, groundwater management and ecosystem components (addressing projected climate change impacts and the need to improve water supply reliability for California).**

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- b. Support continued consideration of Delta island-as-reservoir strategies (such as the Delta Wetlands Project) provided water quality impacts are fully mitigated.**
- c. Support groundwater storage and conjunctive use including identifying more opportunities through the detailed study of groundwater basins throughout California.**
- d. Support groundwater management programs and advocate for funding for groundwater storage and conjunctive use projects that reduce reliance on the Delta in meeting California's future water supply needs.**
- e. Support improved management of groundwater supplies and quality whether implemented at the local, regional, or State level. Effective groundwater management generally requires that the following key elements be in place:**
  - i. Sustainable thresholds for water level drawdown and water quality for impacted, vulnerable, and high-use basins;
  - ii. Incorporate recharge facilities to sustain and enhance existing groundwater basins;
  - iii. Water quality and water level monitoring and assessment, and data management systems, capable of determining if thresholds are being met and evaluating trends;
  - iv. Governance structures with the management mechanisms needed to prevent impacts before they occur, clean up contamination where it has occurred, provide adequate treatment of contaminated drinking water sources, and ensure that meeting groundwater level and quality thresholds are managed over the long term;
  - v. Advocate for funding to support monitoring and governance/management actions; and
  - vi. Support State oversight and enforcement in basins where ongoing management efforts are not protecting groundwater, are causing regional subsidence, and impacting neighboring wells.

*The State's existing water supply and flood control systems are inadequate and, with climate change (such as decreased Sierra snow-pack, increased rainfall, flood, and sea level rise), there will be a greater need for new storage. In addition to new or expanded large-scale surface storage facilities there needs to be additional smaller, regional, multi-purpose facilities. Multi-purpose facilities can better address climate change impacts and are more cost-efficient than traditional surface storage facilities.*

*Three different geographic categories of storage are needed:*

- 1. New upstream storage to capture water during wet periods, which is what Shasta, Oroville, Folsom, etc. do now. However, more upstream storage will be needed to offset*



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*the effects of climate change. There will be less snow pack and more intense runoff earlier in the year and this will need to be stored upstream so it is still available for use later in the year to meet ecosystem and water supply demands.*

2. *New storage south-of-the-Delta so that water that is able to be exported during wetter periods can be stored in the San Joaquin Valley, South San Francisco Bay region, and the Los Angeles and San Diego areas. During wet years, surplus water is often available in the Delta but the farmers do not need it (their fields are already wet from the storm or even flooded) and San Luis Reservoir is quickly filled so there is nowhere to store wet period exports.*
3. *New storage in or immediately adjacent to the Delta – to capture water in the Delta during wet periods, additional storage such as a further expanded Los Vaqueros Reservoir is needed. Such a facility could capture and hold water during Delta surplus conditions, and capture and hold water transfers, for later delivery to regional partners or environmental uses when regulatory and capacity constraints allow.*

*New storage for all three categories will help improve California's water supply and protect Delta water quality. The "Big Gulp, Little Sip" concept is based on taking surplus water from the Delta during wet time periods and storing it south-of-the-Delta for use during dry periods. This allows more water to be left in the Delta during dry months when the ecosystem needs it most. This approach is not possible without additional storage in or near the Delta to capture high flows and new storage to store that water once it is moved south of the Delta.*

*Conjunctive use is the coordinated management of surface and groundwater supplies to increase the yield of both supplies and enhance water reliability in an economic and environmentally responsible manner. The groundwater recharging process is slow compared to surface water reservoirs because of the slow infiltration rates but groundwater storage has fewer environmental impacts than surface storage options. Groundwater management, if left to the local governments or regional partnerships, must be continuously funded by the state to be effective.*

## **5. Water Conservation**

- a. **Support and encourage water conservation activities as a primary first step in any proposed statewide water management strategy.**
- b. **Support and encourage water conserving landscapes.**
- c. **Maximize reuse of reclaimed wastewater.**
- d. **Support acceleration of mandatory water meter requirements throughout the state.**
- e. **Support and advocate for improved agricultural water conservation practices.**

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- i. Encourage elimination of high water use crops such as cotton, alfalfa, and rice (with exceptions where there are multiple benefits).
- ii. Encourage creation of significant water savings through improved agricultural water conservation practices.
- iii. Support detailed study of water used by agriculture in California; what has been done to conserve water and what can be done in the future to attain greater efficiency.
- iv. Encourage limiting permanent crops (e.g. almonds, pistachios) on land that has unreliable or interruptible water supplies based on junior water rights.

*The County has historically supported conservation through development of a water conservation landscape ordinance, a dual plumbing ordinance to maximize use of recycled water where feasible, and an ordinance to use recycled water for dust control and compaction for construction purposes during drought. Water conservation is emphasized, as it has multiple benefits: it reduces water demand, reduces water treatment requirements, and reduces energy use.*

*More recently the California Water Action Plan has been released by the Natural Resources Agency that starts to develop a comprehensive plan to address water management. The California Water Action Plan suggests evaluating and updating targets for additional water use efficiency, including consideration of expanding the 20 percent by 2020 targets by holding total urban water consumption at 2000 levels until 2030, achieving even greater per capita reductions in water use. The administration will also work with local and regional entities to develop performance measures to evaluate agricultural water management.*

*A regional self-sufficiency policy would dictate that conservation, regional groundwater and surface water storage, reuse of reclaimed wastewater and even desalination (where practicable) should be required in areas dependent upon exports from the Delta.*

## **6. Water Rights and Legislative Protections**

### **a. Support and preserve existing water rights and legislative protections established for the Delta and its environments.**

- i. Require that any new assurances arising out of the BDCP process include stipulations by the State Water Project and Central Valley Project confirming, to the satisfaction of the County, existing protections for Delta water users (e.g., the Delta Protection Act of 1959, and area of origin statutes.).

*The system of water rights in California is governed by 'use', or more specifically, 'beneficial use'. Riparian rights (ownership of land adjacent to a surface water source) are senior water rights over most 'appropriative' water rights (which have required a permit since 1914). Most water users in the Delta use water pursuant to riparian and pre-1914 water rights, which are among the most senior water rights in the state. The State Water Project and Central Valley Project water rights are junior to many of the upstream and Delta appropriative water rights.*

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*The Watershed Protection Act and the 1959 Delta Protection Act (area of-origin statutes) were an integral part of the political and legal negotiations to build and export water from the Delta for the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project. These laws were intended to protect future reasonable and beneficial water uses for the areas providing the water so these areas would not be deprived when additional water became necessary. The Delta Vision Task Force reviewed this issue and questioned the need for continuance of these laws. These Acts also include the Delta common pool doctrine.*

*Water right statutes are intended to protect against politically-driven efforts to “share” California’s water (as has been suggested as justification for the BDCP) or improve the priority of junior water right holders in the San Joaquin Valley (e.g., the Nunes Bill, HR 1837 and the Valadao bill, HR 3964).*

## **7. Flood Protection/Floodplain Management**

- a. Support preparation of a comprehensive Flood Management Plan for the Delta.**
- b. Support floodplain management within the watershed to help reduce flood damage within the Delta.**
- c. Advocate for identification, acquisition and construction of appropriate flood bypasses in and around the Delta.**
- d. Advocate for funding assistance for Flood Control District(s) to bring facilities up to a 200-year level of protection.**
- e. Support development of a watershed management plan that would attenuate flood flows naturally by increasing the resident time of stormwater within the entire watershed.**
- f. Support efforts to change existing revenue generation requirements for flood control districts, reclamation districts, cities and counties that would provide parity with wastewater districts and water districts in setting rates to provide basic infrastructure services.**
- g. Advocate for funding assistance to Reclamation Districts to maintain non-project levees and to improve them to appropriate standards, such as PL 84-99.**

*Flood protection standards are changing to a 200 year standard. Flood Control Districts are having difficulty funding new facilities or modifying existing facilities to meet the old standard of 100 years, let alone upgrade to a 200 year standard. There needs to be a funding mechanism in place that allows flood control districts and counties to raise revenue similar to a wastewater district or a water district. Currently Proposition 218 exempts wastewater and water districts from voting requirements to raise rates to properly manage their infrastructure. Proposition 218 needs to be modified to include a similar exemption for flood control and stormwater infrastructure.*

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*In an undeveloped watershed, stormwater remains within the watershed a long time (resident time). As a watershed develops, resident time is reduced and flood flows increase as stormwater quickly runs off paved surfaces. A watershed management plan is a useful tool to develop strategies to increase resident time and help reduce flood flows in a more natural manner.*

**8. Levee Restoration**

- a. Advocate for significant funding for western and central Delta levees, individually and in collaboration with others to support water quality and the existing Delta water conveyance system and protect critical infrastructure.**
- b. Advocate immediate rehabilitation of priority levees on the western and central Delta islands in the strategic levee investments identified in the Delta Plan.**
- c. Advocate for funding assistance for small urban and urbanizing communities within the Delta to attain 200-year flood protection with levees that meet the proposed Urban Levee Design Criteria standards.**
- d. Support using PL84-99 as a minimum design standard for levees.**
- e. Support stockpiling rock in the Delta (and specifically in the western Delta) for levee repair.**
- f. Support a multi-year funding commitment to restore and improve non-project levees and levees outside the State Plan of Flood Control, which is defined in the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan.**
- g. Support and advocate for the Delta Long Term Management Strategy (LTMS) and the beneficial reuse of dredged materials for levee rehabilitation.**
- h. Oppose the Army Corps of Engineer's policy to require removal of all shrubs and trees from levees, unless it can be demonstrated the shrubs and trees impact the structural integrity of the levee.**

*The County has long supported the ongoing maintenance and structural restoration of Delta levees and has actively advocated for funding toward this end, establishing the Delta Levee Coalition with the Contra Costa Council. The eight western Delta islands (six of which are within the County) are critically important, not only to residents, but also to the protection of water quality and supply to 25 million Californians by preventing saltwater intrusion into the Delta. Despite their reliance of Delta levees for conveyance, the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project do not contribute to maintenance of Delta levees.*

*The water exporters and the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) have reevaluated the importance of these western Delta levees and are reluctant to commit significant funding (funding that*

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*could go to an isolated conveyance instead) due to several factors. First, DWR has placed rock piles for “emergency purposes” in several areas of the Delta to block the channels (preventing saltwater intrusion for exporters) in the event of a multiple levee break. Second, the western levees are thought to be at higher seismic risk, due to nearby faults and as a result will be more expensive to fix than levees in the larger Delta. DWR continues to plan and implement efforts to increase emergency response material stockpiles, transfer stations, and contract resources for Delta emergencies. Delta stockpiles of sandbags, plastic, twine, stakes, roll-off containers, and rock have increased. DWR has completed the environmental review for construction of three transfer facilities at Rio Vista, Brannan Island, and the Port of Stockton. Land leases or purchases are expected in 2013 with construction completed in 2014. DWR is also developing emergency contract agreements for construction services. Specifications will be complete in 2013 with contracts in place in 2014.*

*The levees protect many areas that are below sea level due to subsidence, rendering the levees less stable. Climate change impacts of rising sea level and higher flow regimes (due to greater rainfall, less snow) will exacerbate the situation. Recent work by local Delta engineering firms have established that levee repair costs for western Delta levees are not as high as anticipated by DWR’s studies, and there are additional options to reduce seismic risk.*

*Levees also protect critical infrastructure including EBMUD’s aqueducts, highways, railroads, gas wells, gas storage facilities, electric lines, etc.*

*Smaller communities behind levees, such as Bethel Island, Hotchkiss Tract and other communities should benefit from the same level of protection as larger “urban” communities. Urban communities (over 10,000 population) as defined in recent legislation will be required to have a higher standard of levee protection (from a 100-year to a 200-year standard). Funding support for levee strengthening should also be readily available for small communities protected by levees.*

*PL 84-99 levee design standards are used by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for levees over which the Corps has jurisdiction in the Delta. These standards are slightly higher than Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) standards currently in use, and are recommended as a minimum standard for Delta islands remaining in agricultural and other non-urban uses. With climate change, it is anticipated that more stringent standards would be required over time. Because of large-scale changes currently being contemplated for the Delta, a number of Delta islands will be converted to other uses, such as habitat (aquatic and terrestrial) and floodplain. As a result, levees on these islands would not be subject to the above-mentioned minimum standards, reducing costs of levee maintenance to some degree.*

*"Non-project levee" means a local flood control levee in the delta that is not a project facility under the State Water Resources Law of 1945.*

## **9. Emergency Response**

- a. Support collaborative efforts to improve emergency response among the Delta counties to help protect life, diminish suffering, protect property, the environment, and speed recovery in the short, medium and long term.**

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**10. Protect and Restore the Delta Ecosystem**

- a. Support improved flow into, through and from the Delta into San Francisco Bay, as the best available science demonstrates is necessary to conserve salmon and other native fish and wildlife.**
  - i. Increased flows improve water quality which can improve aquatic ecosystem conditions in the Delta.
  - ii. Ensure increased flows in some months do not redirect impacts to fish and water quality to other months
- b. Support ecosystem-based scientific research to determine what is necessary to protect and restore the Delta (i.e. how much water should be preserved for outflows to restore fish populations) and support implementation of recommended actions resulting from these studies.**
- c. Support efforts to restore native fish populations:**
  - i. Thresholds for healthy fish populations must be set significantly higher than past estimates to avoid species' continued listing as endangered.
  - ii. Restore and maintain the commercial and recreational salmon fishery in the Bay-Delta ecosystem by implementing state and federal policies of doubling salmon populations.
- d. Advocate for the acquisition of priority habitat areas (aquatic and terrestrial) and habitat restoration and enhancement projects in cooperation with local government and affected landowners in order to improve the sustainability of threatened fish and wildlife species and contribute to overall health and resiliency of the Delta ecosystem. Such examples include Dutch Slough, Suisun Marsh, and the Knightsen Biofilter projects.**
- e. Support projects that benefit migrating waterfowl.**
- f. Ensure large scale wetlands restoration projects address and mitigate the formation and discharge of methyl mercury and its effect on Delta water quality and fish species.**
  - i. Encourage research and pilot projects on ways to minimize methylation of mercury in Delta wetlands to maximize the fishery and terrestrial species benefits of habitat restoration in the Delta.

*Methyl mercury is a bio-available form of mercury that accumulates in the food chain and is highly toxic. Methylation is the process by which mercury becomes chemically active.*

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**11. Protect and restore the Bay ecosystem through increased outflow from the Delta**

- a. Support increased inflows to San Francisco Bay from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to restore and sustain the Bay ecosystem.**
  - i. Increased freshwater inflows improve water quality which improves aquatic ecosystem habitat in the Bay.
  - ii. Without a healthy Bay it will be difficult to restore and maintain healthy fish populations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, especially anadromous fish like salmon and steelhead.
- b. Support ecosystem-based scientific research to determine what is necessary to protect and restore the Bay ecosystem and fish populations, and support implementation of recommended actions resulting from these studies.**
- c. Support efforts to restore native fish populations in the Bay.**
- d. Build Estuary readiness to deal with the effects of climate change.**
- e. Increase watershed health.**
- f. Support efforts to promote public involvement in Estuary protection and restoration.**

*The Association of Bay Area Government / San Francisco Estuary Partnership's 2011 State of the Bay report found that many fish populations are declining in the Bay and that these declines are due, at least in part, to continued low annual freshwater flows into the Bay as water is diverted from its rivers and the Delta. The report also found fish abundance and diversity are declining in all regions of the Bay except near the Golden Gate and the fish community is in poor condition in Suisun Bay. Both the Bay and Delta ecosystems need to be restored to ensure fish populations can be restored and maintained.*

**12. Controlling Aquatic Invasive Plant Species**

- a. Support the development and implementation of a long-term, area-wide integrated vegetation management program that controls invasive weeds.**
- b. Support integrated pest management practices to control and eradicate invasive plants in critical habitats, water conveyance systems and recreation areas in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta; including its tributaries and its marshes.**

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- c. Support collaboration between local, state and federal governments that use best management practices in the control of invasive weeds.**

*Best management practices include the 1) Least damaging to the general environment; 2) Least hazardous to human health; 3) Less of an impact on non-target organisms; 4) Appropriate considering the absence of listed, candidate, or locally rare or endangered species; 5) Most likely to produce a significant reduction of the aquatic weed; 6) Most cost-effective in the short and long-term; and 7) Encourage early notification to, and collaboration with, drinking water providers within the Delta.*

**13. San Luis Drain/Grasslands Bypass**

- a. Oppose a San Luis Drain and continue to support in-valley, environmentally-responsible resolution of the drainage problem.**

- i. Seek participation by Contra Costa County and other affected stakeholders in any negotiations and planning regarding resolution of the agricultural drainage issue in the San Joaquin Valley.

- b. Continue to support actions that reduce the discharge of agricultural drainage to the San Joaquin River and its tributaries, (e.g., through continued implementation of the Grasslands Bypass project, and actions such as programs to retire drainage-impaired lands, irrigation efficiencies to reduce drainage water, recycling of drainage water and possible treatment of drain water).**

- i. Oppose physical extension of the grassland bypass to downstream of the Merced River.
- ii. Oppose any extension of the Grassland Bypass Project beyond 2019 to ensure the selenium and salt loads from the Grasslands area reduce to zero by 2019 as required by the current Bypass Use Agreement.

*San Luis Drain: The U. S. Bureau of Reclamation is under a court injunction to evaluate and implement options for providing drainage services for the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, which contains toxic concentrations of selenium and other hazardous substances. The San Luis Drain, one option studied, would pass through Contra Costa County to discharge in the Delta. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has elected to address the problem without building the Drain but Congress would need to appropriate the funds before this alternative could be implemented and the injunction requiring provision of drainage service still looms.*

*The County will continue to oppose the San Luis Drain option and support instead drainage solutions in the valley, such as reducing the volume of problem water drainage; managing/reusing drainage waters within the affected irrigation districts; retiring lands with severe drainage impairment (purchased from willing sellers); and reclaiming/removing solid salts through advanced treatment, bird safe/bird free solar ponds and farm-based methods. The County has collaborated with partners to*



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*develop a briefing book on this topic entitled “Drainage Without a Drain” that further explains feasible alternatives that would not damage the environment or downstream interests.*

*Grasslands Bypass: Since 1996, the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation has authorized farmers in the Grasslands area of the San Luis-Delta Mendota Water Authority to discharge drainage through an existing portion of the San Luis Drain to a tributary of the San Joaquin River in order to bypass wildlife refuges that were previously downstream of the agricultural drainage. The San Joaquin River is the ultimate destination for the drainage with or without the bypass project, known as the Grasslands Bypass Project.*

*In addition to avoiding the sensitive wetlands in the refuges, the Grassland Bypass Project requires a number of measures to reduce the downstream impacts of the drainage, including creation of a drainage authority to assume responsibility for the farmers' collective obligations, monitoring of discharges and impacts, limitations on the load of selenium and salt in the drainage and various enforcement measures including provisions to terminate the Project if discharge limits are exceeded. In the first eight years of implementation results have been good and discharges have been steadily declining. Recent pilot studies of advanced treatment of agricultural drainage to remove contaminants using a solar thermal desalination plant are promising. The County will support continuing reduction in agricultural drainage through the Project such that agricultural drainage discharges to the River will reduce to zero no later than 2019.*

*Proposals to extend the San Luis Drain/Grassland Bypass to downstream of the Merced River have been made in order to increase dilution capacity. The County opposes such extension.*

#### **14. San Joaquin River Restoration Program**

- a. Advocate for continued implementation of the San Joaquin River Restoration Program (SJRRP) in achieving its two primary goals: to restore and maintain fish populations and to reduce or avoid adverse water supply impacts.**

*The purpose of the SJRRP is to implement the San Joaquin River litigation Settlement, filed in Federal Court in September, 2006. The Settlement is based on two parallel Goals: restoring and maintaining fish populations in “good condition” in the main stem of the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam to the confluence of the Merced River, including naturally reproducing and self-sustaining populations of salmon and other fish (Restoration Goal); and reducing or avoiding adverse water supply impacts to all of the Friant Division long-term contractors that may result from the Interim Flows and Restoration Flows provided for in the Settlement (Water Management Goal). Implementation of the program has been delayed because of seepage of water from the river onto adjacent lands, failure of Congress to appropriate sufficient funds, and concerns over water costs during the current drought emergency.*

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**15. Climate Change**

- a. Advocate that the impacts of climate change be addressed in any proposed studies and strategies, or in planning, engineering and constructing projects envisioned for the Delta.**
  - i. Request that reservoir and flood control operation rules be revised to adapt to rainfall-runoff changes caused by global climate change.
  - ii. Advocate for increased reservoir storage to offset expected loss of snow pack storage.

*It is now widely accepted that climate change will have wide-ranging impacts on Delta water quality, the Delta ecosystem, and water supplies due to decreased Sierra snow-pack, increased rainfall, flood, and sea level rise. Any current or future planning efforts or implementation measures for the Delta must analyze and address the impacts of climate change.*

**16. Regional Self-Sufficiency**

- a. Support Regional Self-Sufficiency where all regions are required to implement a variety of local water supply options and institute conservation and reuse programs to reduce reliance on exports from the Delta.**

*Conservation programs, maximizing reuse of reclaimed wastewater, groundwater and surface water storage, and consideration of desalination where appropriate should be considered as strategies to enhance water supply in areas dependent on exports.*

**17. Governance**

- a. Support and advocate for local government representation in governance structure(s) for the Delta.**
- b. Advocate for participation by Delta County representatives in the current planning phase and the eventual permit implementation phase of BDCP (i.e. the Authorized Entity Group).**

*The 2009 Delta Reform Act established or altered structures for governance of the Delta in the areas of Water Supply and Ecosystem, and Land Use by establishing a Delta Stewardship Council, a Delta Conservancy, and modifying the membership of the Delta Protection Commission. Local governments represent the majority on the Delta Protection Commission and hold five of the eleven seats on the Delta Conservancy. Contra Costa County holds a seat on both bodies. There is only one local representative on the Delta Stewardship Council and that seat is filled by the Chair of the Delta Protection Commission. The potential adverse impacts on the Delta from BDCP will be huge and Delta representatives need a seat at the table in deciding how to avoid and mitigate those impacts.*

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**18. Delta Counties Coalition (DCC)**

- a. Continue active and full participation in the Delta Counties Coalition based on the adopted DCC Principles.**

**19. San Francisco to Stockton Deep Water Ship Channel**

- a. Continue to advocate and support the deepening of the John F. Baldwin and Stockton Deep Water Ship Channels as a contributing Local Sponsor.**

*The existing navigation channel depth of 35 feet and widths are inadequate to allow for the efficient movement of commercial deep-draft waterborne commerce. Currently, many deep-draft vessels using the existing navigation channel must either partially load, lighter (partially off-load into smaller vessels), or wait for favorable tides before transiting the channels – all of which result in significant increased transportation costs.*

*The project will reduce transportation costs and increase economic efficiency of maritime commerce en route to refineries and the Port of Stockton, improve maritime navigation by reducing public safety risks due to possible groundings or collisions, and reduce potential environmental effects from increased vessel trips in the channels associated with current light loading and lightering operations. The project also provides a valuable opportunity to beneficially reuse approximately 15 million cubic yards of dredged sediment to restore hundreds of acres of marsh habitat in subsided Delta islands (such as Big Break and Frank's Tract). This project benefit is synergistic with other regional habitat restoration initiatives in that it provides a critical supply of dredged sediment to the Delta, where there is a need for sediment to support habitat restoration and flood protection goals.*

**20. California Water Bond Principles**

- a. The County supports and strongly encourages a water bond that achieves the following principles:**
  - i. Allocates funds for the Delta through the Delta Conservancy;
  - ii. Any bond funds for water storage or water system operational improvements should be required to result in measurable improvements to the Delta ecosystem;
  - iii. Does not fund BDCP conveyance alternatives or measures required as mitigation by BDCP; and
  - iv. Includes significant funding for watershed protection by local agencies and for local flood control.

*The Delta provides a common resource, including fresh water supply for all Delta water users, and all those whose actions have an impact on the Delta environment share in the obligation to restore, maintain and protect Delta resources, including water supplies, water quality, levees, and natural habitat.*