

The background of the cover is an aerial photograph of a wetland. The left side shows a clear view of a river or stream with green grasses and trees along the banks. The right side is a faded, semi-transparent version of the same scene. A vertical blue line is on the left side of the page. A pink horizontal bar is at the top.

Fish Restoration Program Agreement

# Prospect Island Communications & Engagement Plan

To Inform Implementation of the Fish Restoration Plan

A joint program between the California Department of Water Resources and  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife



Cover: Prospect Island, Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel, and Liberty Island (Photo Credit: Dale Kolke)

# Prospect Island Tidal Habitat Restoration Project

## Communications and Engagement Plan

*a project of the  
California Department of Water Resources &  
California Department of Fish & Wildlife's*

## Fish Restoration Program Agreement

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## **1 PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Prospect Island Tidal Habitat Restoration Project Communications and Engagement Plan (“C&E Plan” or “Plan”) is to inform how federal, state and local government agencies, landowners, environmental interests, agricultural interests, local flood management entities, and community members can be involved in implementing the Prospect Island Tidal Habitat Restoration Project (Project). This C&E Plan serves as a supplement to the Fish Restoration Program Agreement (FRPA) Program-Level C&E Plan, which is available on the FRPA website.<sup>1</sup>

## **2 PROSPECT ISLAND LOCATION**

Prospect Island is a 1,600-acre property located in Solano County, in the Cache Slough Complex of the northwestern Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The land is comprised of two properties: the northern 1,300-acre portion owned by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) and the southern 300-acre portion owned by the Port of West Sacramento (Port). Prospect Island is situated between the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel (DWSC) to the west and Miner Slough on the east. Liberty Island, a 4,500-acre naturally-breached island that is restoring to tidal marsh and open water, sits just west across the DWSC. Ryer Island, a large agricultural tract, lies just east across Miner Slough. To the north is the Clarksburg Agricultural District. To the south is Cache Slough. Prospect Island is still designated as part of the Yolo Bypass, although it was cut off from the main Yolo Bypass with construction of the DWSC in the 1950s. It functions today as a high stage overflow basin, as does Little Egbert Tract to the southwest.

## **3 PROSPECT ISLAND PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This project is sponsored by DWR and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW, formerly California Department of Fish & Game, or DFG), through implementation of the 2010 FRPA. DWR and CDFW, collectively referred to as the “Implementing Agencies,” are in the process of implementing FRPA to implement specific fish habitat restoration requirements and related actions under the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS 2009) Salmonid and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 2008) Delta Smelt Biological Opinions (BiOps) and the CDFW (2009) Longfin Smelt Incidental Take Permit for coordinated long term operations of the State Water Project (SWP) and the federal Central Valley Project (CVP).

FRPA is focused on restoring 8,000 acres of intertidal and associated subtidal habitat in the Delta and Suisun Marsh to benefit delta smelt, 800 acres of low salinity habitat to benefit longfin smelt and a number of related actions to restore migratory pathways and juvenile rearing habitat for salmonids in the Yolo Bypass. The goal of the Prospect Island Tidal Habitat Restoration Project is to support recovery of delta smelt, Chinook salmon, and many other Delta-dependent fish and wildlife species, as partial fulfillment of the 8,000-acre tidal restoration obligations.

Restoration objectives are to enhance aquatic foodweb productivity within and around Prospect Island, create and enhance juvenile salmonid rearing habitat, create and enhance habitats for many other species, provide long-term resiliency with climate change, avoid conditions that detract from meeting the project goals, and provide other ecosystem services such as water quality and carbon sequestration. The project also would serve as partial fulfillment of tidal restoration objectives under the proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.water.ca.gov/environmentalservices/frpa.cfm>

## **4 PROSPECT ISLAND STAKEHOLDER AUDIENCES**

To support the project, outreach will focus on the audiences listed in the FRPA Program-Level Communications and Outreach Plan (Section 7, External Engagement: Audiences and Coordination), with an emphasis on Solano County stakeholders in particular. Some of these key Prospect Island audiences are included among the list of potentially affected parties in Section 6.3 below.

## **5 KEY MESSAGES**

Key messages to support communications and engagement for the project will be drawn from the FRPA Program-Level Communications and Engagement Plan (Section 8, Key Messages). Additional messages specific to Prospect Island include:

- FRPA is committed to public engagement and information sharing to allow stakeholders to understand what activities are taking place, and how they can contribute their perspectives in the development of the planning and implementation process.
- The Prospect Island Tidal Habitat Restoration Project is the first project being implemented solely under the FRPA program.
- The State is committed to being a good steward of the property and a good neighbor to bordering properties and Solano County. All of the land being restored at Prospect Island is publically owned.
- To restore Prospect Island, FRPA will be working in conjunction with local governments and other restoration efforts, and in compliance with existing land use plans.
- FRPA will be reaching out and creating proactive, constructive, and forward-looking partnerships early on with interested stakeholders.
- The FRPA program is committed to finding a balance between achieving restoration benefits and minimizing potential negative impacts. Project implementation will be based upon a sound scientific foundation and reliance upon adaptive management principles.
- The Prospect Island Tidal Habitat Restoration Project will help inform the planning and design of future restoration projects in the Delta, Suisun Marsh, and the Yolo Bypass.

## **6 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

FRPA program staff will draw from the list of potential activities below to engage stakeholders and other interested parties in Prospect Island project planning and implementation. Engagement activities will be selected to achieve the C&E Goals listed in Section 3 of the FRPA Program-Level C&E Plan and will be informed by the Approach and Principles outlined in Section 4 of the FRPA Program-Level C&E Plan.

### **6.1 Informational Briefings through Existing Stakeholder Engagement Venues**

FRPA program staff will present periodic briefings on the status and progress of the Prospect Island Project to interested stakeholders and the general public at existing Delta program meetings. The goals of these briefings are to share information, build relationships, provide program updates, and solicit input. Potential engagement venues for informational briefings include, but are not limited to:

- Delta Conservancy
- Delta Stewardship Council

- Delta Protection Commission
- Delta Independent Science Board

## **6.2 Informational Briefings with Local Governments and Agencies**

FRPA program staff will conduct informational briefings with key local government and agency staff in Solano and Yolo counties, as well as elected officials who might be interested in the Project. These meetings will serve to brief these individuals on the status of the Project and allow them to effectively respond to questions from constituents related to the Project.

## **6.3 Engaging Landowners and Other Potentially Affected Parties to Inform Project Design**

The Project will be implemented in accordance with the environmental review requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As such, FRPA will hold briefings with adjacent landowners and other potentially affected parties prior to release of the Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation (NOI/NOP), and during the comment period following the release and publication of the NOI/NOP. These briefings serve the purpose of receiving input regarding potential issues and determining the focus and content of the combined Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) to be prepared for the Project. Key potentially affected parties may include but are not limited to:

- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Port of West Sacramento
- Reclamation District 501 (Ryer Island)
- Reclamation District 2068 (Solano)
- Reclamation District 999 (Clarksburg)
- San Francisco Bar Pilots Association
- Solano County Water Agency
- Solano County
- Arrowhead Marina and other adjacent landowners

## **6.4 Informational Briefings with Other Interested Parties**

FRPA program staff will meet informally (“meet & greets”) with other local interested parties as needed. The purpose of these meetings is to connect with local stakeholders to brief them on the status of the program, build relationships, provide project updates, and receive input. The FRPA Team will also use these meetings to describe the FRPA program within the context of other Delta restoration projects and other related programs, and describe coordination across these programs.

## **6.5 NEPA/CEQA Process and Environmental Review**

Consistent with the requirements of NEPA and CEQA, FRPA staff will hold a public scoping meeting after release of the NOI/NOP. The public scoping meeting will determine the focus and content of the EIS/EIR. FRPA program staff will implement the following steps to help ensure effective stakeholder and public engagement in the environmental review process.



### **6.5.1 NOI/NOP**

1. Develop a NOI/NOP distribution list:
  - Include NEPA and CEQA mandatory recipients (government agencies, neighboring land owners, etc.)
  - Include other interested parties as identified through multiple means, including the FRPA stakeholder assessment interviews, ongoing outreach activities of the Delta Conservancy, Delta Stewardship Council, and Bay Delta Conservation Plan, and the distribution list for the Lower Yolo restoration project.
  - Build this information into a FRPA stakeholder database that will have durability for managing interests; comments during CEQA, NEPA and the permitting process; and future projects.
2. Develop and publish a press release for the NOI/NOP:
  - Announce the release of the NOI/NOP and notify the public of the scoping meeting time and location.
  - Determine appropriate media outlet(s), such as the Sacramento Bee, News Ledger (West Sacramento), Daily Republic (Fairfield-Suisun City), The Reporter (Vacaville), River News-Herald (Rio Vista), Rio Vista Beacon (Rio Vista), and Davis Enterprise (Davis).
3. Publish the NOI/NOP:
  - Circulate the NOI/NOP electronically to the distribution list and mail hard copies as mandated by NEPA and CEQA.
  - Submit it to the State Clearinghouse (NOP).
  - Publish it in the Federal Register (NOI).
4. Conduct NOI/NOP scoping meeting:
  - Hold the public scoping meeting during the scoping period. The scoping meeting timing will be based on the NOI/NOP release date.
  - Develop meeting format, agenda, presentations and other associated materials.
5. Produce a Scoping Report following conclusion of the scoping period that summarizes and catalogs public comments received.
6. Maintain current information throughout on the FRPA website.

### **6.5.2 Draft EIS/EIR**

1. Update the distribution list for the Draft EIS/EIR with any additional interested parties that have requested to be involved.
2. Prepare and submit a Notice of Completion for the Draft EIR (CEQA).
3. Prepare and publish a notice in the Federal Register for the Draft EIS (NEPA).



4. Prepare and post in the appropriate news media a public notice of the hearing to receive public comments on the Draft EIS/EIR.
5. Conduct a Draft EIS/EIR public comment hearing:
  - Hold a public hearing during the comment period. Timing will be based on the Draft EIS/EIR release date.
  - Develop meeting format, agenda, presentations and other associated materials.

### **6.5.3 Final EIS/EIR**

1. Update the distribution list for the Final EIS/EIR with any additional interested parties that have requested to be involved.
2. Distribute the announcement of the CEQA Notice of Determination (NOD) and public comment period and NEPA Record of Decision (ROD) notice and public comment period. No public meetings are required.

## **7 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH MATERIALS**

### **7.1 Prospect Island Fact Sheet**

FRPA program staff will develop a project-specific fact sheet to inform interested stakeholders about the Prospect Island Project. Key content elements will include:

- Location description and associated small vicinity map
- Restoration project description (purpose of the project, project goals, summary of anticipated restoration actions)
- History of the property and long-planned restoration
- Expected benefits of restoration
- Public involvement opportunities
- FRPA website URL

The fact sheet will be prepared as a PDF that can be downloaded from the FRPA website and as hard copy to hand out at meetings and other public outreach events and venues.

### **7.2 Web-Based Outreach**

FRPA program staff will develop a project webpage to make up-to-date information on the Prospect Island Project available and accessible to interested stakeholders. The website will be updated as new information becomes available. Key information to be posted includes:

- Information about the NEPA/CEQA and regulatory process
- Status of the Prospect Island restoration planning process
- Upcoming involvement opportunities.
- Link to the Prospect Island fact sheet
- Link to sign up for FRPA email list-serv

### 7.3 Other Outreach Materials and Activities

As needed, FRPA program staff will make necessary updates to all existing outreach materials and will develop additional outreach materials, to include PowerPoint presentations, press releases, project brochures, responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs), and talking points. FRPA program staff will also engage in additional targeted outreach to inform and involve stakeholders as the project evolves. During potential comment periods, FRPA program staff will be available during weekly office hours to talk with stakeholders about the proposed project. All commenters will be encouraged to submit their respective comments in writing.

## 8 PUBLIC OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

The following public outreach opportunities are planned for the project. This list is not all-inclusive, and additional public outreach opportunities will be noticed as they become available.

Public Involvement Opportunity	Approximate Timing
Notice of Intent/Notice of Preparation (NOI/NOP) for preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) with a public comment period and scoping meeting	Spring 2013
Draft EIR/EIS: Public comment period and a public hearing	Winter or Spring 2014
Final EIR/EIS: Notice of Determination (EIR) and Record of Decision (EIS), each providing a public comment period	Summer or Fall 2014

