



CALIFORNIA CENTRAL VALLEY  
FLOOD CONTROL  
ASSOCIATION

# CCVFCA'S Flood Flash

Sept. 7, 2016

Send news tips, feedback, and subscription requests to [cindy@floodassociation.net](mailto:cindy@floodassociation.net)

## CALENDAR ALERTS

### **Sept. 6-9**

[FMA Annual Conference](#), Sacramento Hyatt Regency Hotel.

### **Sept. 6**

[California Extreme Precipitation Symposium](#), Sacramento Hyatt Regency Hotel. (Note: CEPSYM is during the day of the FMA Annual Conference as a stand alone event. Please see link to register.

### **Sept. 19**

USACE [deadline](#) to submit annual WRDA projects.

### **Sept. 20**

[Deadline to comment](#) on Folsom Dam Raise Project supplemental [EIS/EIR](#).

### **\*\*Sept. 22**

Deadline to comment on draft [science report](#) on Delta levee hazards workshop.

### **Sept. 23**

Delta funding [application deadline](#), emergency response [grant program](#).

### **\*\*Sept. 27**

[Public meeting](#) on Prospect Island [EIR](#), 611 Village Dr, Suisun City, 7-9 pm.

### **Sep. 29**

Adopt Draft Prioritization of Delta Levees, DSC, 980-9<sup>th</sup> St., 9:30 am.

### **Oct. 3**

Deadline to submit Prop. 1 [Urban Rivers Grant](#) applications.

### **\*\*Oct. 7**

Deadline for [EIR comments](#) on Prospect Island restoration project, 5:00 pm.

### **\*\*Oct. 11**

[Deadline to submit](#) prize-winning burrowing prevention idea.

### **Oct. 20-21**

Precipitation Forecasting [Workshop](#), Los Angeles. *\*More details to follow*

### **\*\*Oct. 27**

Little Hoover Commission hearing on special districts (no agenda available yet).

**\*\* = [New Calendar Alert](#)**

## **FEATURED ASSOCIATE MEMBER**

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## **KEEPING UP**

***\*\*Check [CCVFCA Website](#) for more information on topics in Flood Flash***

### **USACE Investing in Central Valley Levee Improvement Projects**

Fiscal participation of the U.S. Army Corps (USACE) in urban levee improvements in Marysville and Natomas will allow next phase of construction to begin in both areas.

SAFCA has already finished improvements on 18 miles of levee in the Natomas Basin, and now the federal government is ready to start the next phase of the 42 mile project to reduce flood risk for over 100,000 residents and major infrastructure including the Sacramento International Airport as well as Interstates 5 and 80, and Highway 99. In mid-August, leaders from the USACE, Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB), and the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) [signed a project agreement](#) formalizing commitment to complete the levee upgrades. Homeowners and businesses in the area can expect to see construction start sometime in the spring of 2017.

The USACE also awarded an [\\$824,764 contract to construct](#) the next phase of upgrades to the 7.6-mile ring levee surrounding Marysville. The improvements are intended to reduce seepage by adding deep cut-off walls in the levee and a 500-foot stability berm. Started in 2010, the multi-phase project is a partnership between the Sacramento District of the USACE, the Central Valley Flood Protection Board, and the Marysville Levee District.

### **Proponents Closer to Expanding Paradise Cut to Accommodate Flood Flows**

After 25 years and \$150 million in investments, including construction of an oversized "super" levee and a school, the Cambray Group is [ready to sell homes](#) at River Islands at Lathrop, a master-planned community with views of the San Joaquin River. They are also making progress on the permit process they started in 2002 to [expand the Paradise Cut](#). Working with state and local flood control agencies to expand the flowage area and provide habitat for endangered riparian rabbit, the Cambray Group officials are hopeful the 14-year effort to gain approval to set back levees on the north and south sides of the bypass are on track to be finalized by 2018.

### **Public Review Opened for Tidal Habitat Restoration Project in Northern Delta**

[DWR recently released](#) a draft Environmental Impact Report ([EIR](#)) for a 45-day public review and comment period on a tidal restoration habitat project proposing to breach levees on Prospect Island. The Department of Water Resources will present an overview of the project and provide an opportunity for the public to offer input on the draft EIR at an evening meeting scheduled on Tuesday, **September 27, 2016 from 7:00-9:00 p.m.** at the Suisun City Nelson Community Center (Meeting Room A), 611 Village Dr., in Suisun City.

Part of the California EcoRestore program to meet State's goal to restore at least 30,000 acres of Delta habitat, the proposed project is also a key element of the [Fish Restoration Program](#) designed to [address specific habitat restoration requirements](#) for operation of State Water Project and Central Valley Project, and is specifically aimed at partially fulfilling an obligation in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biological opinion Reasonable and Prudent Alternative 4 to restore 8,000 acres of tidal habitat to benefit Delta smelt.

Prospect Island is a 1,600 acre Delta property in Solano County, located between the Sacramento Deep Water Ship Channel (DWSC) on the west and Miner Slough on the east, with Ryer Island (RD 501) levee just across Miner Slough and Liberty Island on the other side of the DWSC to the west. The northern end of Prospect is bounded by an east-west levee that runs from Arrowhead Harbor Marina to the DWSC and the confluence of the DWSC and Miner Slough at the southern boundary. Although isolated from the main reach of the Yolo Bypass when the DWSC was constructed in the 1960s, Prospect Island is still technically part of the southern end of this [State Plan of Flood Control](#) facility.

In addition to the removal of a portion of an internal cross levee separating the northern and southern parcels, the project also proposes to breach Prospect Island levees in two places in order to expose the island to daily tidal inundation:

1. North side approximately 0.5 miles south of Arrowhead Harbor Marina;
2. South side near formerly repaired levee breach connecting to the Miner Slough spur channel.

Other project activities include excavation of tidal slough channels, and construction of an overflow weir near the entrance of the Arrowhead Marina that would be designed to overtop periodically at high tide during spring conditions.

Project impacts identified in the EIR that could affect local flood control agencies (RD 501, 536, 999, and 2084) performing their drainage and levee maintenance duties include: changes in water surface elevations (up to 0.5 feet upstream of project); flow increases (2,500-5,000 cfs) in Miner, Sutter, and Steamboat Sloughs; and increased tidal prism in Cache Slough Complex during flood and ebb tides.

The potential for scour and erosion to reduce the stability of RD 501's levees on Miner Slough is acknowledged in Impact 3.1-5, but no mitigation measure that includes enforceable commitment for long-term monitoring and repair is offered. Instead, DWR claims that these impacts would be less than significant because they would fund repairs if damage is determined to be caused by the project. Seepage and erosion of nearby levees, as well as impacts to downstream water users, are also identified in the "Areas of Controversy" section, but no mitigation measures are provided because DWR determined them to be unfounded or less than significant.

If you want your comments to be considered by DWR when they revise the project description and impacts analysis for Final EIR, then written comments with recommended mitigation measures must be received no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, **October 7, 2016** by email to [frpa@water.ca.gov](mailto:frpa@water.ca.gov) or mailed to DWR, Attn: Dan Riordan, P.O. Box 942836, Sacramento, CA, 94236.

### **Study Enthusiastic About Flood Control Facility as Food Source for Fish**

According to participants of a study involving pilot projects designed to help endangered fish, the results from the first update of the State's "[Delta Smelt Resiliency Strategy](#)" show significant promise for the Yolo Bypass floodplain to produce food supply for Delta smelt. Implementation of the actions in the Strategy involves a [cooperative effort](#) between state, federal and local entities including [Reclamation District 108](#), Reclamation District 2035, the [Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District](#) (GCID) [Knaggs Ranch](#), and [Conaway Ranch](#). Projects along the Sacramento River and through the Yolo Bypass implemented by these agencies include the [Wallace Weir](#) and [Knights Landing Outfall Gates](#) projects constructed by RD 108 and the placement of about 9,400 cubic yards of gravel upstream in the Sacramento River immediately below the Anderson-Cottonwood Irrigation Diversion Dam and the Market Street Bridge by GCID.

Earlier this summer, the coordinated actions of these individual projects to improve fisheries involved increased Keswick flows, delivery of Sacramento River flows by GCID, additional pumping and coordination of Wallace Weir improvements by RD 108, with additional pumping by Conaway Preservation Group and Department of Water Resources at the modified Knights Landing Outfall Gates. The result was a redirection of water from the Sacramento River down the Colusa Basin Drain, through the Knights Landing Ridge Cut Slough, past Wallace Weir, and through the Yolo Bypass in the Delta.

The appearance of a substantial plankton bloom at Rio Vista was a sign to participants that these coordinated efforts were successful in increasing downstream food web resources for smelt.

### **Eligibility for State Funding of Delta Levees Should Change According to DSC**

The Delta Stewardship Council (DSC) released a [staff report](#) on Monday, August 22nd with proposals to carry out the Delta Levee Investment Strategy (DLIS), which were considered by the Council later that week. The staff's recommendations are a combination of [new flood-related actions](#) (shown in blue underline) to be amended into the Delta Plan Chapter 7 containing flood risk reduction policies and a proposed [list of how Delta islands should be prioritized](#) for receiving levee improvement funding from the state.

Among other things, the additions to the Delta Plan include directing the Central Valley Flood Protection Board (CVFPB) to amend their [Delta Subvention Guidelines](#) to revise eligibility for receiving state funding and recommends the Legislature amend the [Subvention program statutes](#) to raise the \$1,000 per mile deductible to account for inflation (staff calculates it should be \$5,600 per mile). The staff report also offered "alternative" Plan amendments for the Council to consider, but these were not discussed.

Unfortunately, an opportunity to have the state agency responsible for the [State Plan of Flood Control](#) and the [Delta Levee Subvention Program](#) assist in crafting new flood control actions to amend into the Delta Plan was not utilized ten days earlier. A joint meeting of the DSC with the CVFPB was held on [August 12, 2016](#) to [coordinate development](#) of the Delta Levee Investment Strategy in accordance with [Consultation Guidance](#) previously adopted by the CVFPB, but no specific proposals or amendment language related to the CVFPB authority and jurisdiction were presented by DSC.

At the DSC meeting on August 25, 2016, members of the CA Central Valley Flood Control Association (CCVFCA) and Executive Director, Melinda Terry, expressed concerns with the proposed Delta Plan amendments. Their comments focused on explaining the problems with the recommended changes to the local agency's cost for participating in Subventions Program, and using limited Subvention Program funding to pay for an annual inspection program for non-project levees and to purchase easements for subsidence and public access instead of funding levee maintenance and improvement projects that actually buy down risk of levee failure.

CCVFCA representatives also emphasized the importance of working with the CVFPB to revise the proposed language to be consistent with the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan and the flood board's strategic objectives, as well as language in the DSC's final report to clearly state that the prioritization of islands for funding is guidance only and that introduction of legislation is premature because further research on the ability to pay is necessary first.

Melinda Terry also attended the CVFPB meeting on August 26<sup>th</sup> to advise them of the Delta Plan amendments presented the day before at the DSC meeting. She requested their immediate engagement with the Council on drafting revisions to the new provisions relevant to their duties and responsibilities. CCVFCA will submit written comments on the proposed amendments to the DSC prior to their next meeting on September 29, 2016.

For those interested in how their island is initially ranked for future state funding, the prioritization list divides Delta islands/tracts into three categories: "Very High", "High", and "Other." There are 14 islands/areas in the Very High category, 28 in the High, and the remaining 98 islands are in the Other category.

The staff report explains that for districts in the "Other" category, "It is unlikely that State funds, other than subsidies for levee maintenance, would be provided to these islands and tracts." The underlying data used to quantify risk is available in an updated final [Risk Analysis Methodology Report](#) for the Delta Levees Investment Strategy. If you have any comments or corrections on the report, please send them to Dustin Jones, [Dustin.Jones@deltacouncil.ca.gov](mailto:Dustin.Jones@deltacouncil.ca.gov).

The good news for local reclamation districts is the staff report also states that, "All islands and tracts entitled to participate in the Delta Levees Subventions Program should remain eligible for the funding for levee maintenance." The intent is for the funding prioritization to only apply to levee improvement projects, not routine maintenance.

DSC's [schedule](#) for completing the DLIS process includes holding workshops in October to receive public input on the proposed amendments and island prioritization, adopting the amendments and priority funding list in December, and sending a report of the final levee investment strategy and recommendations to the Legislature by the end of the year.

### **DSC Appeals Ruling Declaring Delta Plan "Invalid"**

On August 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Delta Stewardship Council [filed an appeal](#) of a [June 24, 2016 clarification ruling](#) of the Sacramento Superior Court to its prior [May 18, 2016 ruling](#) that invalidated the Delta Plan for failure to include enforceable, quantifiable targets in accordance with certain provisions in the 2009 Delta Reform Act. More information about the Superior Court rulings and DSC's responses is available on the [litigation page](#) of their website.

Winning their legal appeal could take DSC a while, and modifying the Delta Plan with new quantifiable targets would probably take even longer. Meanwhile, there is a presumption that any amendments to the Delta Plan approved by the DSC, such as the draft Delta Levee Investment Strategy discussed above, would not become effective until a valid Delta Plan is in place to insert the amendments.

### **Add Your Two Cents on Report Summarizing Science Workshop on Levee Hazards**

The Delta Independent Science Board is accepting comments on a [draft report](#) that summarizes presentations/[abstracts](#), discussions, and recommendations from a [July workshop](#) on latest scientific research regarding Delta levee hazards (earthquakes and high water events).

Examples of points highlighted in the 8-page narrative section include recent studies indicating distant Bay Area quakes pose less hazard to Delta levee stability than previously thought, DRMS attenuation equations for Bay Area quake transmission were overestimated by factors of two to four, and recommendation for academics to reach out to Delta levee engineers and maintainers with on-the-ground experience when conducting research.

To help authors develop a final report, send your comments to [kelly.souza@deltacouncil.ca.gov](mailto:kelly.souza@deltacouncil.ca.gov) by September 22, 2016.

### **Special Districts Examined by Little Hoover Commission**

On August 25, 2016 the [Little Hoover Commission](#) held a public [hearing on special districts](#) as a follow-up to an evaluation and [report issued in 2000](#) about how the more than 2,200 districts throughout the state are funded and the services they provide. Taxpayer groups raised concerns regarding the amounts held in reserves by the districts. Special districts representing water, fire, sanitary, health care, and others testified about the types of specialized services provided at a local level, the importance of property taxes, and explained building reserves is especially necessary for water districts planning capital improvement projects. The Commission will have another hearing on October 27<sup>th</sup> to examine how governance and financing of special districts should be modified, with a report containing recommendations for reform to be issued afterwards.

### **Win a Cash Prize for Best New Idea on How to Prevent Rodent Burrows on Levees**

The federal government is thinking outside the box to find creative solutions for preventing tunneling through the interior of levees by burrowing animals. The USACE and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation are teaming up with the State of Colorado Department of Natural Resources Dam Safety Branch and several local water irrigation districts to reward agencies, organizations, or individuals that come up with new cost-effective ways of keeping burrowing animals from damaging earthen embankments of dams, canals, and levees with their industrious digging.

To compete for this cash prize, creative "Solvers" must register in the "[Preventing Rodent Burrows in Earthen Embankments Prize Competition](#)" available at two online platforms:

- [The Water Pavilion](#)
- Federal Government [Challenge Platform](#) (scroll down to find rodent competition)

If interested, you should review the [Federal Notice](#) to see the requirements that each entry must address, as well as things NOT to include in your submission. Total prize payout will be \$20,000, with at least one award being \$5,000 and other awards being no smaller than \$2,500. The deadline to submit your prize-winning idea is **October 11, 2016**. Winners will be announced by December 27, 2016. GOOD LUCK!

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## **IN THE NEWS**

*(Clicking the links will take you to news organization websites, where you can read the full stories. CCVFCA is not responsible for content on these external sites.)*

- [Bill to speed up projects such as Sites faces Assembly](#) - Appeal Democrat
  - [Poisonous Algae Blooms Threaten People, Ecosystems Across U.S.](#) - KQED News
  - [Support Garamendi in Twin Tunnels fight](#) - Daily Democrat
  - [New Baton Rouge flood map shows limits of current risk and planning methods](#) - California WaterBlog
  - [Snowpack 'double whammy' may hit western mountain streams](#) - Reno Gazette-Journal
  - [Reservoir and water conditions for August 29, 2016](#) - Maven's Notebook
  - [Rerouted water may provide big bonus for endangered smelt](#) - Oroville MR
  - [New Collaborative Strategy Improves Conditions for Delta Smelt](#) - ACWA News
  - [Project aims to feed Delta smelt – 'They're starving to death'](#) - Sacramento Bee
  - [\\$825K contract awarded for work on Marysville ring levee](#) - Appeal Democrat
  - [DSC Appeals Invalidation of Delta Plan](#) - ACWA News
  - [Farms as floodplains: A summary after five years of experimental flooding of agricultural land](#) - Maven's Notebook
  - [This just in ... Delta Stewardship Council appeals June 24 ruling of Sacramento County Superior Court](#) - Maven's Notebook
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