yolo basin foundation

June 26, 2008

Honorable Phil Isenberg
Chair, Blue Ribbon Task Force
Delta Vision
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

To the Honorable Phil Isenberg:

On behalf of the Yolo Basin Foundation Board of Directors we would like to invite you on a personal tour of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. This community-based project, also known as the Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area, is one of the largest wetlands restoration projects west of the Mississippi. The Wildlife Area, owned and managed by the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is approximately 16,770 acres of managed wildlife habitat and agricultural land within the Yolo Bypass. It is located within the legally defined Delta. We want to show you a great example of a successful project that embodies many of the twelve integrated recommendations described in the Blue Ribbon Task Force's Delta Vision Report.

Located adjacent to Interstate 80 and within minutes of downtown, the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area serves as a gateway to the North Delta. With the Capital skyline as a backdrop, the Wildlife Area illustrates to the public the importance and the feasibility of the co-existence of agriculture, wildlife, and flood protection.

This truly unique wildlife area is a mosaic of natural and managed wetland habitats that are operated by DFG with the goal of reestablishing wetlands while maintaining the flood control function of the Yolo Bypass. , Under an innovative partnership with the Dixon Resource Conservation District, DFG practices wildlife-friendly agriculture, including the planting of 1500 acres of rice. This provides important income for the management and operation of the property.

The Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area is one of the largest publicly owned open-spaces in the Sacramento Valley. A very successful partnership between the Yolo Basin Foundation and DFG provides a myriad of outreach and education programs that enhance the visitor experience. Serving 4,000 K-12 students annually, the *Discover the Flyway* program for schools is the largest educational effort supported by this partnership. Since 1997 over 30,000 students representing 100 schools in 15 districts have participated in *Discover the Flyway*. Other programs include monthly field trips to the Wildlife Area, special tours to see the evening fly-out of the largest colony of Mexican free-tail bats in California, a vernal pool open house, and California Duck Days, the oldest wildlife oriented festival in California. For many participants these opportunities are their first exposure to the wonders of the Delta.

We would like to share this very special place in the North Delta with you by taking you on a personal tour. Thousands of people are inspired on a daily basis by the wetlands right next to the Causeway. This time of year commuters may see flocks of White-faced Ibis as they travel to

and from their nesting colony in the summer- flooded wetlands next to Interstate 80. In the fall and winter visitors and passersby can see hundreds of thousands of ducks, geese and swans feeding in the flooded rice fields. We hope the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area will inspire you as well in your quest to find solutions to the Delta's future.

Please contact either of us and we will be glad to give you a tour that fits with your busy schedule.

Sincerely,

Betsy Marchand
Board Chair
(530)756-0521

Robin Kulakow
Executive Director
(530)756-7248