From: Tara Beltran [mailto:TBeltran@sfcwa.org]
Sent: Wednesday, March 02, 2011 3:16 PM
Subject: Notice of Preparation - Lower Yolo Bypass Restoration Project

Good Afternoon,

The following information regarding the Notice of Prepartion for the Lower Yolo Restoration Project is sent on behalf of the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency.

Also included are the details for a March 15, 2011 Public Scoping meeting.

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting

The State and Federal Contractors Water Agency will be the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act and will prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the proposed project identified below. We are requesting input from government agencies, other organizations, and private citizens regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. Responsible agencies are requested to indicate their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Public agencies receiving this Notice of Preparation may need to consider the EIR prepared by our agency if they need to issue permits or other approvals for the proposed project.
The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attachment. A copy of the Initial Study is attached. The full version of the Initial Study can be viewed or downloaded at: http://www.swampthing.org/Downloads/Lower-Yolo-NOP-IS_2011-0225.pdf or in hard copy by request.

Public Scoping Meeting: A public scoping meeting for this project has been scheduled for:
Tuesday, March 15, 2011 from 7:00PM to 8:30PM at West Sacramento City Hall, 1110 W Capitol Ave #1, West Sacramento, CA 95691.

The purpose of the meeting is to receive comments regarding potential environmental issues related to the proposed project. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Please send your response or questions to Curt Schmutte at the address shown above or via email at schmutte@sfcwa.org<mailto:schmutte@sfcwa.org>. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15378.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION
LOWER YOLO RESTORATION PROJECT

Description of Proposed Project. The State and Federal Contractors Water Agency (SFCWA) proposes to construct a 1,950-acre project that includes 1,170 acres of tidal wetland restoration and 780 acres of related property modifications on a 3,900-acre site on the northwestern edge of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta at the extreme southern end of the Yolo Bypass near Cache Slough (**Figure 1**). The project would be constructed on portions of two contiguous parcels: Yolo Ranch (3,496 acres) and Flyway Farms (430 acres) located along the historic wetland-upland edge of the Yolo Basin, within the Yolo Bypass floodway. The project site is currently in agricultural use, and agricultural lands bound the project site in all directions except the immediate south, which is bounded by open waters of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta.

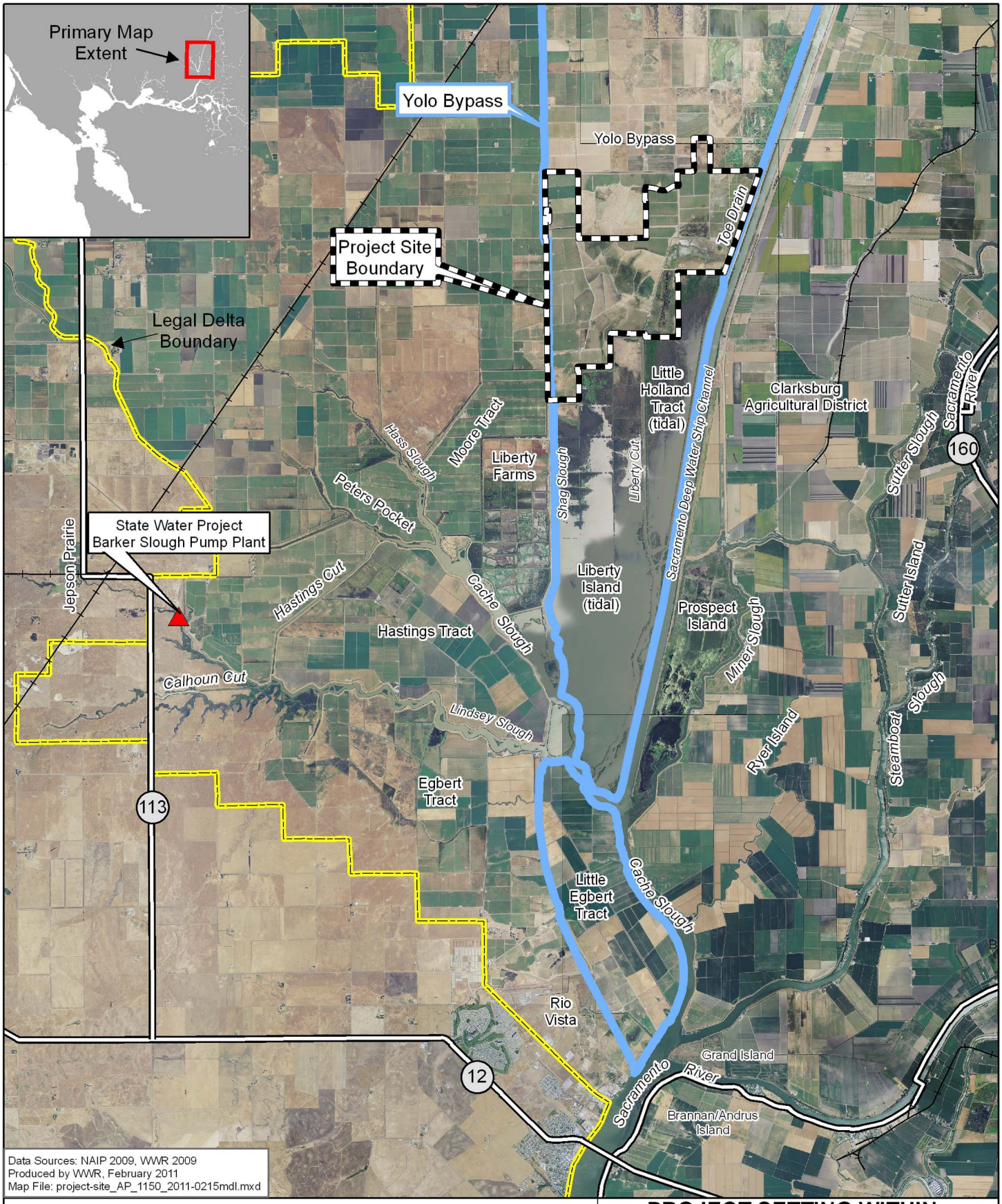
This project is being undertaken in cooperation with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) as partial fulfillment of the 8,000-acre tidal restoration targets contained within the Reasonable and Prudent Alternative of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Delta Smelt Biological Opinion (USFWS 2008) and the National Marine Fisheries Service Salmonid Biological Opinion (NMFS 2009) issued to DWR. The project may also serve as partial fulfillment of tidal restoration objectives anticipated under the Bay Delta Conservation Plan. The primary goals of the project are (1) to enhance regional food web productivity in support of Delta Smelt recovery and (2) to provide rearing habitats for outmigrating salmonids utilizing the Yolo Bypass. The secondary goals are (3) to support a broad range of other aquatic and wetland-dependent species, including Sacramento splittail, and (4) to provide ecosystem functions of the Delta freshwater tidal marsh – floodplain – seasonal wetland – lowland grassland interfaces.

The proposed project design is presented in **Figure 2**. Actions within the 'proposed project footprint' would include (1) restoring approximately 1,100 acres of intertidal wetlands and 70 acres of subtidal channels by grading and excavation ('restoration footprint'), (2) constructing a 120-acre levee toe berm and a 10-acre irrigation and drainage ditch, (3) removing agricultural irrigation from approximately 650 acres surrounding the restored wetlands ('wetland buffer'), and (4) relocating several water control structures and some irrigation and drainage ditches. Tidal restoration would be accomplished by eliminating or moving existing water control infrastructure elements, excavating new tidal channels to connect restoration areas to existing intertidal areas adjacent to the site and grading down some lands slightly above current intertidal elevations. Excavated soils would be used to construct the levee toe berm on the eastern (water) side of the western Yolo Bypass levee.

Surrounding the restored wetlands would be an additional 650 acres on which agricultural irrigation would be discontinued. Seasonal cattle grazing would be permitted within this 'wetland buffer zone' as a vegetation management tool. In order to ensure that irrigation and drainage needs of the remainder of the site and of adjacent properties are maintained, the proposed project would relocate a number of water control structures and some irrigation and drainage ditches. Areas on the property that are outside of the project footprint would remain in their current condition and would continue to support agricultural operations following project implementation.

Potential Project-Related Impacts to the Environment. As currently scoped, the EIR will evaluate potential project impacts associated with the following issues:

- Land use planning and agricultural resources, focusing on conversion of agricultural lands to wetland/habitat uses.
- Air quality and greenhouse gases, including both short-term construction and long-term operational impacts.
- Biological resources, focusing impacts to state and federally listed plants, invertebrates, fish, and birds as well as state and federally protected habitats such as wetlands and riparian woodlands.
- Cultural resources, including prehistoric and historic features, and historic landscapes.
- Soil erosion.
- Hazards and hazardous materials, including site contamination and cleanup issues and issues associated with abandoned gas and water wells on the site.
- Hydrology and water quality, including changes in flood flows, irrigation waters, site and adjacent property drainage, construction sedimentation, and changes in dissolved oxygen, mercury, and organic carbon, as well as other potential contaminants.
- Potential land use policy compliance issues
- Impacts associated with barging of soils under the off-site soils disposal options, including potential conflicts with commercial and recreational navigation.
- Utilities issues, including the need to relocate and/or abandon utility infrastructure on portions of the site.



Data Sources: NAIP 2009, WWR 2009
Produced by WWR, February 2011
Map File: project-site_AP_1150_2011-0215mdl.mxd

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N W E S

SFCWA
State & Federal Contractors Water Agency

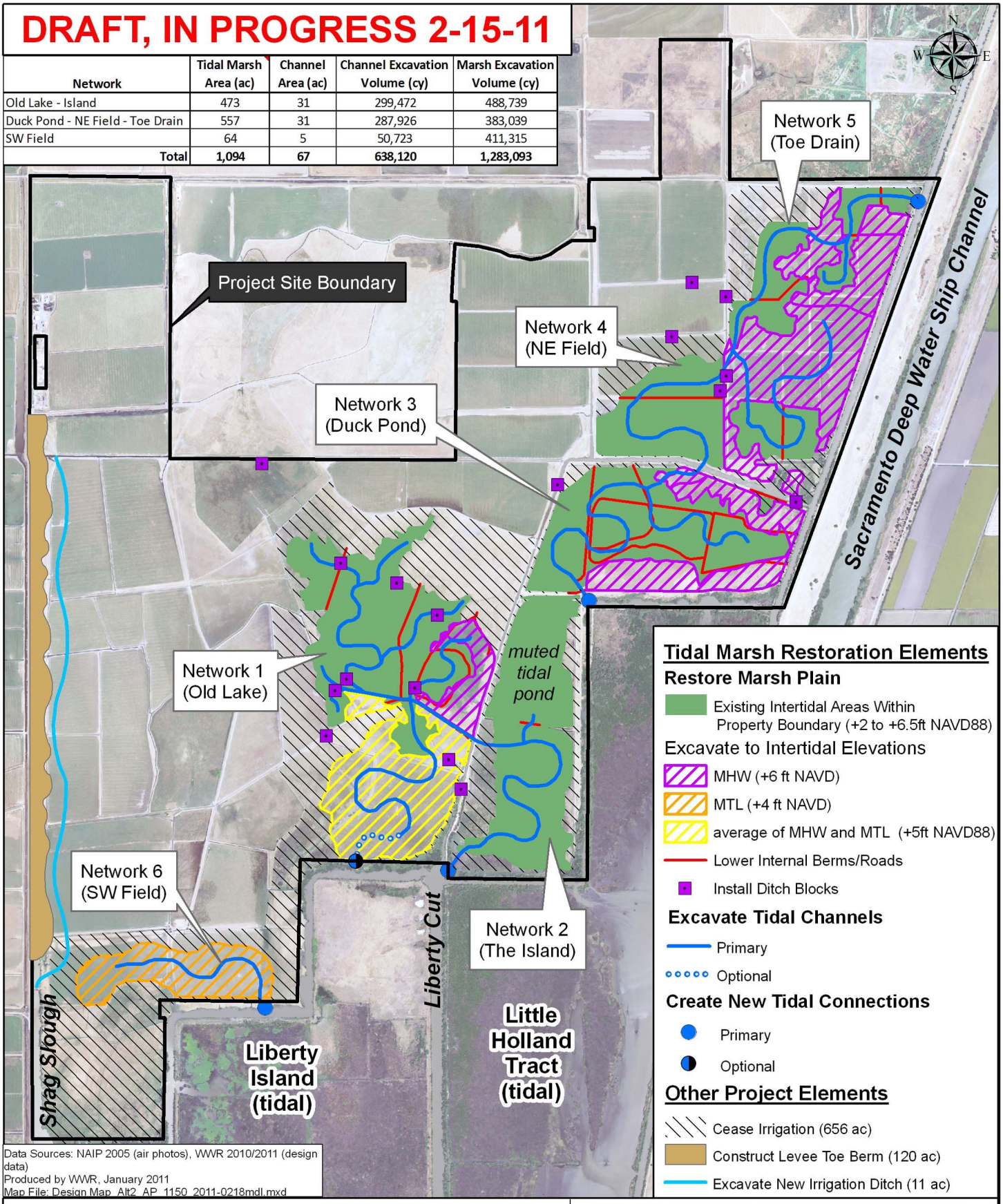
PROJECT SETTING WITHIN CACHE SLOUGH REGION

Lower Yolo Restoration Project
Yolo County, California
State and Federal Contractors Water Agency

February 2011	Project No. 1150	**Figure 1**

DRAFT, IN PROGRESS 2-15-11

Network	Tidal Marsh Area (ac)	Channel Area (ac)	Channel Excavation Volume (cy)	Marsh Excavation Volume (cy)
Old Lake - Island	473	31	299,472	488,739
Duck Pond - NE Field - Toe Drain	557	31	287,926	383,039
SW Field	64	5	50,723	411,315
Total	**1,094**	**67**	**638,120**	**1,283,093**



Data Sources: NAIP 2005 (air photos), WWR 2010/2011 (design data)
Produced by WWR, January 2011
Map File: Design Map_Alt2_AP_1150_2011-0218mdl.mxd

1:30,000 (1" = 2,500' at letter layout)

0 1,250 2,500 ft

0 400 800 m

cbec eco engineering

WETLANDS AND WATER RESOURCES

SFCWA State & Federal Contractors Water Agency

RESTORATION DESIGN FEATURES - PROPOSED PROJECT

Lower Yolo Restoration Project
Yolo County, California
State and Federal Contractors Water Agency

February 2011	Project No. 1150	**Figure 2**