



INFORMATION ITEM

National Heritage Area Management Plan Update

Summary

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009 and Delta Plan Recommendation DP R1 called on the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) to pursue federal designation of the Delta as a National Heritage Area (Water Code Section 85301(b)(1)). Federal legislation establishing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area (NHA) and designating DPC as the local coordinating entity was signed into law on March 12, 2019. At today's Council meeting, DPC staff will provide an update on the development of the Management Plan for the NHA, highlighting the interpretive themes, and describing ways the Council can engage with DPC to successfully implement the Management Plan.

Background

DPC has been working on a Management Plan for the NHA that must be approved by the Secretary of Interior. The Congressional deadline for submitting the Management Plan is March 12, 2024, five years after designation. The Management Plan outlines the significance and purpose of the NHA, as well as the activities that DPC and a regional network of partners will undertake over the next 10 to 15 years.

One key component of the Management Plan is the interpretive themes that describe the significance and tell the story of the Delta to the state and the nation. An interpretive theme is a central concept or key idea used when planning exhibits, experiences, activities, programs, and presentations.

Management Plan Requirements

Congressional legislation mandates that the Management Plan represent the diverse interests of the NHA. The planning process must provide opportunity for the public and all levels of government to be involved, including consideration of

government plans and Tribal governments' plans and treaty rights. The Management Plan must incorporate an integrated and cooperative approach to the protection, enhancement, and interpretation of the natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and recreational resources of the NHA. Required components include:

- A resource inventory;
- Policies, strategies, and recommendations for conservation, funding, management, and development of the NHA;
- Recommendations on coordination with governmental and Tribal programs;
- A description of actions that the partnership network will take to protect regional resources;
- An interpretive plan;
- Funding sources; and
- An implementation plan that includes actions to facilitate regional collaboration and specific commitments for the first five years by the Commission and partners.

The legislation prohibits the acquisition of real property with federal funds appropriated for the NHA and sets forth specific protections for private property rights and the existing jurisdiction of regulatory entities in the region.

[Management Plan Outreach to Date](#)

DPC staff kicked off public outreach for the Management Plan in January 2021 with the first NHA Advisory Committee meeting. The Committee has met sixteen times to date. Four advisory task groups – Heritage Development and Tourism, Interpretive Planning, Organization, and Resource Stewardship – have also met to discuss specific topics.

In addition to the NHA Advisory Committee and Task Groups, DPC staff worked with California State Parks and consultants PointHDC to conduct the following outreach activities:

- Two in-person public meetings in Benicia and Walnut Grove in August 2021;
- Sessions on the management plan topics at the 2021 and 2022 Delta Heritage Forum;
- Two online surveys, one intended for the general public and the other for interpretive providers such as historical societies and museums;

- Interviews with stakeholders and interpretive providers; and
- Meetings with tribal officials to discuss the management plan and interpretive plan.

Draft Management Plan Recommendations to Date

The NHA Advisory Committee and task groups have worked with PointHDC and California State Parks to prepare draft objectives, strategies, and actions for interpretation, heritage development and tourism, and resource stewardship.

DPC and California State Parks staff have also prepared draft interpretive themes, including working with Tribal representatives on a theme focusing on Native Americans. The draft interpretive themes are listed below.

Interpretive Themes and Storylines

1. **Water: Precious Lifeblood for the Delta and California.** The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is California's oasis, and as such lies at the center of the state's challenges and opportunities in allocating its finite freshwater resources across an infinite number of needs.
2. **The Beating Heart of Natural California.** The Delta lies at the center of California's biological and physical environment, supporting numerous biologically diverse species and connecting freshwater from throughout California to the Pacific Ocean.
3. **Native Americans in the Delta.** TBD: Theme statement and storylines being reviewed during tribal consultation.
4. **Making the Delta into a Modern Garden.** The Delta's lush vegetation was transformed into farmland through capital, human labor, and technology, affecting many through history and making it an important resource for the state.
5. **California's Cornucopia – Variety and Bounty.** The Delta's topography, water, soils, and Mediterranean climate make it one of the nation's most productive agricultural regions with the ability to grow a large variety of crops, farmed by large and smaller operations.
6. **Cultural Influences of the Delta –Enduring Legacies of Asian, European, and Mexican Immigrants and American Migrants.** Bringing their own ambition and skills to the Delta, cultural and ethnic communities from Asia, Europe, the Eastern United States, and Mexico shaped the region's

agriculture and industry during the late 19th century and early 20th century and continue to leave an indelible imprint on the landscape.

Supporting Themes

1. Northern California's Inland Defense (1850s-1940s)
2. The Creative Inspiration of the Delta (1900s-Present)
3. Delta as Recreational Retreat (1950s-Present)

Next Steps

DPC staff and the PointHDC team are currently preparing the draft Management Plan for NHA Advisory Committee, National Park Service, and Commission review. As part of preparation of the draft plan, DPC staff is:

- Developing an implementation plan for goals, objectives, actions, budget, and timeline;
- Identifying the ways in which the goals, objectives, and strategies will meet Congressional requirements; and
- Collaborating with partners to determine roles and contributions in undertaking actions in the management plan, and securing commitments from partners.

Depending on duration and feedback received from the initial National Park Service review, Commission staff anticipate releasing a draft plan in late 2023.

Fiscal Information

Not applicable.

List of Attachments

No attachments.

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