

FINAL

Approved by Advisory Committee on April 21, 2025

SUMMARY

Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion And Multi-Benefit Project

Advisory Committee Meeting

City of Lathrop

December 2, 2024 | 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Committee Members (Present):

Chris Elias, San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency

John Herrick, South Delta Water Agency

Sarah Puckett, American Rivers

Ilene Macintire, City of Tracy

Bob Pombo, Reclamation District 2095

Alexis Stevens, Reclamation District 2058, 1007

Susan Dell'Osso, Reclamation District 2062

Jesus Esparza, Department of Water Resources (non-voting)

Andrea Buckley, Central Valley Flood Protection Board (non-voting) (via Zoom)

Lauren Damon, Sacramento – San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (non-voting)

Committee Members (Absent):

Nick Mussi, Reclamation District 1, 2, 544, 2089

Other In-Person Attendees:

Glenn Prasad, SJAFCA

Leanne Randall, SJAFCA

Petrea Marchand, Consero Solutions

Laura Duffy, Consero Solutions

Ric Reinhardt, Wood Rodgers

Melissa Weymiller, LWA

Dominick Gulli, RD 1607

Pam Forbus, RD 5

Paul Marchini, RD 1

Greg Pombo, RD 2058

Avery Livengood, HDR

Zoom Attendees:

Phil Balmat, San Joaquin County Resources Conservation District

Nick Prichard, RD 2058

Alan Coon, RD 2064

Pat Kelly (Affiliation Unknown)

Will Anderson, State Water Resources Control Board

Patricia Flores Yrarrazaval, American Rivers

Daniel DeGraaf, RD 2085 and 2095

Sylvia Razniak, SJAFCA

Becky Money, MBK Engineers
Steve Sinnock, KSN

HIGHLIGHTS

Administrative Matters

- J. Herrick, Advisory Committee Chair, called the meeting to order.
- L. Randall called the roll and established a quorum. Advisory Committee members John Herrick, Sarah Puckett, Ilene Macintire, Andrea Buckley (attended on Zoom), Jesus Esparza, Susan Dell'Oso, Alexis Stevens, Lauren Damon, Bob Pombo, and Chris Elias were present. Nick Mussi was absent.
- L. Duffy read out the list of Zoom attendees.
- J. Herrick said the first item on the agenda was to approve the October 15, 2024 Advisory Committee meeting summary (Attachment A). Motion: S. Puckett, second S. Dell'Oso. Motion passed 7-0; 1 absent.

Receive and File Final Decision Recommendation Framework (Attachment B)

- J. Herrick said the San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (SJAFCA) approved the final Decision Recommendation Framework (Attachment B) and is providing the final Framework to the Advisory Committee for informational purposes. He said no action was required for this item.
- The Advisory Committee received and filed the final Decision Recommendation Framework.

Public Outreach Update

- P. Marchand provided an overview of primary audience meetings since October 15, 2024. She said SJAFCA approved the Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion and Multi-Benefit Project Engagement Strategy. She said the outreach team held meetings with reclamation districts in October at which the engineers requested an early meeting with the Technical Team to provide input early into development of alternatives. She said this second meeting occurred in November. She said the group also met with the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy. She said the outreach team has an initial meeting with staff from the State Water Resources Control Board in December.
- P. Marchand said the outreach team drafted a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document (Attachment C), included in the meeting packet for the Advisory Committee's review and feedback.
- P. Marchand asked if there were any comments or questions about public outreach thus far or the FAQ document.
- P. Marchand said the next update is on the engagement strategy schedule and budget, which is included with a staff report as Attachment D. She said the staff report had two additional attachments, Attachment D1, which is the schedule and budget for the engagement strategy requested at the October Advisory Committee and Attachment D2, which is the draft engagement strategy. The engagement strategy is now final since SJAFCA approved the engagement strategy after the project team sent out the Advisory Committee agenda and materials. She said there is an action for the Advisory Committee associated with this item, which is to recommend the engagement schedule and budget to the SJAFCA Board of

Directors. She said she would like to modify this action to recommend an action to SJAFCA instead of the SJAFCA Board of Directors, since Chris Elias as Executive Director will make this decision.

- P. Marchand provided background on the status of the engagement strategy. She said the engagement strategy approved by SJAFCA represents the “gold standard” for the engagement strategy, which includes meetings added by the Advisory Committee and the Project Team to ensure interested parties have sufficient input into project development. She said as stated in the engagement strategy assumptions, the engagement strategy is a living document which SJAFCA can modify based on the availability of funding, as shown on this slide. The staff report lays out the details regarding the additional funds needed to implement the gold standard for the engagement strategy. She said SJAFCA is recommending a silver standard for the engagement strategy, which involves eliminating Consero assistance with outreach on the draft feasibility study report in November/December 2025, in part because the project team assumes interested parties will have reached an agreement on a preferred alternative by this time. If not, the South Delta Water Agency and SJAFCA staff will conduct all remaining outreach without Consero assistance. She said Consero has also offered to donate \$5,000 for any needed assistance at the end of the process not covered by the existing contract. She said finally, SJAFCA recommends paying for any of Wood Rodgers time through the entire engagement strategy process with contingency, since Wood Rodgers did not originally budget for participation in outreach meetings. However, due to the complexity of this project, the team may need to balance the need for Wood Rodgers engagement with the need to complete the deliverables identified in the DWR funding agreement.
- P. Marchand said if SJAFCA identifies additional resources for engagement in the coming months, they may recommend adding back some engagement assistance. She said if the Advisory Committee approves the proposed change to the engagement strategy schedule and budget, Consero will modify the engagement strategy schedule presented in the packet as Attachment D1 and seek SJAFCA approval. She asked if there were any questions.
- J. Herrick said it would be easy for South Delta Water Agency to do outreach in that fall of 2025.
- A. Stevens asked to clarify the “silver standard approach” meant Consero would not be involved with outreach efforts in fall of 2025. P. Marchand confirmed.
- J. Herrick said this is a look to make sure there is sufficient budget for engagement through Phase 3. He said the action before the Advisory Committee is to recommend the engagement strategy schedule and budget to SJAFCA, with the budget changes presented on the slide, specifically South Delta Water Agency and SJAFCA will partner to complete any engagement needed on the Draft Feasibility Report in November/December 2025 without Consero assistance, Consero will donate \$5,000, and SJAFCA will fund Wood Rodgers participation through the engagement process through Project contingency. SJAFCA also would like to note that if SJAFCA identifies additional funds, SJAFCA may consider adding additional consultant assistance back into the last phase of the engagement strategy process.

- Motion: S. Dell’Osso, second: Sarah Puckett. Motion passed 7-0; 1 absent.

Feasibility Study Update (Attachment E)

- R. Reinhardt from Wood Rodgers and A. Livengood from HDR provided an update on the feasibility study. R. Reinhardt said this is an informational item for the Advisory Committee that does not require action. He said the goal is to provide a preview of the first four chapters of the feasibility study, which the Advisory Committee will receive for review on December 16, 2024. He reviewed the outline of the feasibility study chapters (Introduction, Inventory and Forecast, Problems and Opportunities, Goals and Objectives, Formulation of Preliminary Alternatives, and Evaluation and Comparison of Final Array of Alternatives). A. Livengood described Chapter 1 (Introduction). She said the team updated the study area map in Chapter 1 to reflect comments: the team added in the reach of Old River between the San Joaquin River and Middle River, added Tom Paine Slough, and expanded Grant Line Canal and Fabian Bell Canal to cover the whole canal.
- A. Livengood said Chapter 2 (Inventory and Forecast) is the longest chapter the group will receive. She said this chapter is an inventory and forecast of critical resources (physical, demographic, economic, social, etc.) to set the context for the problems and opportunities under consideration in the planning area. She said this section will also summarize the preliminary findings of modelling and the technical analyses that have been done to date. She said that includes things like sedimentation, channel capacity, flood hazards, biological resources, etc. She said Chapter 3 (Problems and Opportunities) takes what was discussed in Chapter 2 and identifies problems (existing undesirable conditions) and opportunities (chance to create a future desirable condition). She said Chapter 4 (Goals and Objectives) describe the goals (desired end state of the Project) and objectives (more specific and narrowly defined ways to achieve goals) of the Project. She said the team has not made changes to the Goals and Objectives since the Advisory Committee approved them in August 2024. She said the new item in Chapter 4 is a summary of the key constraints to achieving the goals and objectives, for example, long term operations and maintenance.
- R. Reinhardt said the chapters have three technical appendices. Anchor QEA prepared the first appendix, which examines sedimentation rates in the downstream channels. He said Anchor QEA’s analysis looked at historic bathymetry and determined accumulation rates over time. He said findings show, and as the team has heard from interested parties, that the portion of the Delta in question has been experiencing sedimentation increases for decades. He asked if there were questions. S. Puckett asked what was causing the sedimentation. R. Reinhardt said he did not recall that element of the appendix, but the information will be in the packet for the Advisory Committee’s review. S. Dell’Osso said the map image looks like it does not cover the whole study area and asked if the intent was to include the whole study area in the analysis. R. Reinhardt said the ESA analysis (second appendix) covers the riverine portion of the system. He said there is a handoff point at Old River where ESA’s analysis ends and Anchor QEA’s analysis begins.
- R. Reinhardt said the second appendix is ESA’s analysis of sediment transport. He said ESA conducted a sediment transport model looking at sediment coming

down the system and how sedimentation rates are expected to change (comparing existing conditions to without-project conditions). R. Reinhardt showed slides titled “South Delta Reaches with Threatened Diversions and Relatively High Sedimentation Rates” and “Sediment Transport Proportion and Rate.” R. Reinhardt asked if there were questions. L. Damon asked if ESA expects this will have an effect on water temperature. R. Reinhardt said in this case, the team is looking at large flood event and he said he does not think the team anticipates there would be an effect on temperature in a large flood event. He said the primary concern with temperature is with lower flows and the Project is not anticipated to have a substantive effect on temperature. He said this is an important part of the water quality discussion. L. Damon said water quality will be an important metric with the dredging aspect for habitat related reasons, which might be outside the scope of this analysis. R. Reinhardt said the water quality elements of Chapters 1-4 touch on temperature.

- R. Reinhardt reviewed the “Climate Change Hydrology” slide and asked for staff recommendations on which five flood events the team should analyze as part of the study. He said the feasibility study team is using a planning horizon set in 2072 to match the future climate change and sea level rise assumptions from the 2022 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan. He said another important metric is the design of the Mossdale Urban Flood Risk Reduction (UFRR) study. He said the team is using flows at Vernalis; he said this is a good metric for understanding the differences between alternatives. He said for the Lathrop-Manteca study, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is using a 2085 sea level rise and flow at Vernalis similar to the existing 200-year (98,000 cfs at Vernalis). R. Reinhardt said the team is scoped to look at five runs but needs guidance paring down from seven runs. He listed six runs the team is evaluating: 1955 design flow, 1997 flood event (including failures that occurred during event), 100-year (does not include levee breaks, only overtopping), existing 200-year (97,000 cfs at Vernalis) with existing conditions sea level, existing 200-year with Central Valley Flood Protection Plan 2072 sea level rise (what River Islands used), and 200-year with 2022 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan 2072 midlevel climate change hydrology (306,000 cfs at Vernalis) and 2022 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan sea level rise. He said in addition, SJAFCA had also asked the team to add the Mossdale UFRR run. R. Reinhardt said the team proposes to eliminate two runs: the 1997 event, since it is similar to the 100-year event, and the existing 200-year with Central Valley Flood Protection Plan 2072 sea level rise. He asked for input and said the staff recommendation is to proceed with the five runs the feasibility study team is scoped for.
- S. Puckett asked why the team would eliminate existing 200-year with Central Valley Flood Protection Plan 2072 sea level rise instead of the existing 200-year (97,000 cfs at Vernalis) with existing conditions sea level rise. R. Reinhardt said the team wants to compare changes to existing conditions. He said it is not “apples to apples” to take today’s 200-year hydrology and 2072 sea level rise. He said ideally, the team would carry all seven runs forward but to meet the budget they need to carry five forward. He said it is important to have the 200-year existing with existing sea level rise and because the 1997 is almost identical to the 100-year it makes sense to eliminate.

- J. Herrick said his reaction is to include the 1997 run, but the 1997 run had levee breaks. He said he felt removing the 1997 run was appropriate. He said the Paradise Cut Management Team discussed this at length. He said he understands the limitations and the reasons the scenarios were chosen.
- S. Dell'Oso said she likes the 1997 scenario with levee breaks because it illustrates an actual occurrence but she understands the rationale for dropping it. R. Reinhardt asked if there was a levee break in Reclamation District 2095 in 1997. B. Pombo confirmed. R. Reinhardt said because of the changes the Project would make where the levee breaks occurred, there is a rationale for excluding it. B. Pombo said the levee broke in 1997 on the Manteca side a few days later. He said even if 2095 does not break, it still could break on the other side. S. Dell'Oso said she is not proposing the feasibility study team do not exclude it, but she wanted to state River Islands has used it many times.
- R. Reinhardt asked for other comments.
- J. Esparza said he asked the modelers from DWR who were involved in the 2017 and 2022 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan updates and they agreed with R. Reinhardt's proposal.
- G. Prasad said the group has chosen events that capture 300,000 cfs (ultimate flow), 200,000 cfs (existing 200-year at Vernalis), and 100,000 cfs. He said the runs also connect to different regulating agencies. For example, the Mossdale UFRF study run aligns with DWR's design standard for urban levee compliance along Mossdale. He said the selected flows make sense from a hydrologically standpoint and a regulatory standpoint.
- J. Herrick said he has come full circle on what should be analyzed in different forms. He said the analysis is not to determine if anyone will be flooded in the future under a particular event; the analysis is to see what the benefits are of a proposed project. He said the most realistic way to do it is to look at increments of flood flows and see how the Project affects those.
- R. Reinhardt shared the review schedule. He said the Paradise Cut Consultant Team is in the process of resolving Technical Review Panel comments. He said he went through all the comments from the Technical Review Panel and said he did not see anything to worry about for Chapters 1-4, Anchor QEA's report, or MBK's report. He said the Technical Review Panel provided more significant comments on ESA's sediment transport report, so that is where the Consultant Team will focus the bulk of its attention. He said after the team addresses Paradise Cut Management Team comments, the Consultant Team will send the deliverables to the Advisory Committee for review on December 16th, with Advisory Committee review needing to be completed by January 3.
- R. Reinhardt discussed next steps. He said as the team wraps up Chapters 1-4, the team will develop a list of measures and screening criteria and form into alternatives. He said a measure is a feature of an alternative. He said the scope includes up to eight preliminary alternatives, including the no action, which will be narrowed down through the screening process. He said the next deliverable up for Advisory Committee review is the Development of Preliminary Alternatives. R. Reinhardt asked the Advisory Committee for other guidance for what the team

should be considering as part of alternatives formulation.

- J. Herrick said there was further technical information provided at the recent Paradise Cut Management Team meeting and the group had good discussions. He said he asked staff to not include some of the technical materials for this meeting. He said the consultants have done a good job. He said some potential alterations to the Project might not fly too well with the public. He said he did not want to present them right now so different landowners, organizations, and interests would not get upset. He said analyses of different alternatives include different possibilities for dredging. He emphasized the interests he represents and the delicate balance needed for this Project. He said you can come up with different approaches to dredging but any substantial deviation from a systemwide dredging program is going to cause problems and reduce local agency support for the Project. He said in his view, the alternatives need to focus on things similar to the existing proposed project. He said the Project is in the feasibility study stage. He said ideally the next step is CEQA; so there are mandatory elements to consider in the alternatives. He said ideally the group does not go off on an idea that may seem good but would ultimately disrupt fragile support for the Project. He said right now the districts downstream are only tentatively in support, so substantial changes would be challenging.
- J. Herrick asked for comments from Advisory Committee members.
- S. Puckett said one of the measures she would like to see is the number of acres of habitat. R. Reinhardt said yes and asked if there was a type of habitat she was interested in. S. Puckett said in general and it would be nice to see a breakdown of different habitats (floodplain, riparian, etc.) **(ACTION)**. J. Herrick said South Delta has identified some potential habitat opportunities; he asked if those could be included at this stage. He said there is an island he is talking to a landowner about. R. Reinhardt asked if this was in the Resource Conservation District (RCD) memo as a potential restoration opportunity. J. Herrick said yes. R. Reinhardt said the team will consider opportunities from the RCD memo **(ACTION)**.
- J. Herrick said this is the time to comment to provide consultants with direction.
- M. Weymiller noted the team looked at something different than the minimum viable alternative because the feasibility study stage has funding to research potential issues for which funding was not available in previous stages. She said one potential issue is the cost of the Project. J. Herrick said those are the kinds of analyses we hope consultants bring up. He said the railroad is an issue everyone is considering. He said he and C. Elias have discussed how to align the Project with existing railroad plans.
- S. Puckett asked if the consultant team would develop the eight alternatives by the next Advisory Committee meeting in April. R. Reinhardt said his team will work with the Paradise Cut Management Team this month to develop the list and then will flush out the alternatives with the engineering team. He said the team will release Chapter 5, which has the preliminary alternatives, in April.
- B. Pombo said unless there is a way to get more water through under or around the railroad, RD 2095 will be unable to support the Project.
- J. Herrick said it is his intent that discussions with reclamation districts are ongoing

so they are aware of what is and is not being considered.

- J. Herrick asked for public comments.
- D. Gulli, engineer, said he felt it was fundamentally flawed to think levees will act as weirs. He said once they start acting as a weir, the backside will erode and the levees will break. He said we know from history that during high water events the levees break. He said he does not understand how the team can make the assumption the water will just flow over it. J. Herrick asked if D. Gulli was referring to the assumption of overflows at high flows for the modelling or the specifics of a new weir itself. D. Gulli said he was discussing the modelling. He said from history, a levee does not act as a weir. He said it happened in 1997 and will happen again. He said in 2017, water was rising on Bob Pombo's levee and it looked like a big problem. He said the problem is due to lack of additional funding for protection there. He said to assume a levee will act as a weir is not viable.
- J. Herrick said he agrees, though the challenge is how to analyze different higher flow events with the Project. He said good, bad, ugly or distaste, this is what modelers say you must look at to consider changing conditions. D. Gulli said he wanted to respectfully disagree. He said you may not be able to predict where the levee will break, but it is going to break at x feet wide. He said it is predictable and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manual has procedures for how to predict levee breaks. He said when it is a sand levee, it will erode a lot faster. J. Herrick said he is not arguing; you can take the U.S. Army Corps model and try to predict a break, but there are so many unknowns.
- A. Coon (Zoom) said Reclamation District 2064 remains concerned about Airport Way Bridge. He said there has been sediment stored there for four to five decades and it is a serious problem. He said he would like to see an option in the alternative.
- R. Reinhardt asked to clarify which waterway. J. Herrick said A. Coon was referring to the San Joaquin River at Airport Way Bridge. J. Herrick said the South Delta Water Agency is exploring ways to address the issue but deferred to consultant team about whether this can be part of the alternatives **(ACTION)**. J. Herrick said upstream dredging was not part of the original plan, so they will see what they can do, but this is an important comment.
- J. Herrick asked for online comments. No online comments.

SJAFCA Update

- G. Prasad provided an update from SJAFCA. He said SJAFCA had their Board meeting in September and the Board authorized Chris Elias, Executive Director, to finalize documents and make policy level decisions in collaboration with the Paradise Cut Management Team and the Advisory Committee. With that authority, C. Elias finalized the Decision Recommendation Framework and the Engagement Strategy. He said at last SJAFCA Board meeting, the Board discussed the Project as part of its portfolio of projects to combat climate change. He said the Project is part of SJAFCA's Strategic Plan and is priority action #13 for SJAFCA. He said the SJAFCA Strategic Plan is available on the SJAFCA website, if anyone is interested in how SJAFCA thinks of Paradise Cut in relation to other work.
- G. Prasad said Restore the Delta recently coordinated a meeting for SJAFCA and the Delta Stewardship Council to understand restoration opportunities in our

community. He said several agencies listed in the Project engagement strategy attended. He said SJAFCA spoke about numerous restoration opportunities on the San Joaquin River for the Mossdale Project and advocated for Paradise Cut. He said this was received well. He said the Delta Stewardship Council asked SJAFCA to provide a briefing to their Board **(ACTION)**.

- He said SJCOG is also in the engagement strategy. He said the Project would affect transportation infrastructure, so continued coordination with SJCOG is important.
- G. Prasad said SJAFCA recently received a Regional Flood Management Program (RFMP) grant (funded through the CVFPB). He said this funding will help him provide input to the Board.

Department of Water Resources, Central Valley Flood Protection Board Update, and Delta Conservancy Updates

- No updates from DWR or CVFPB.
- L. Damon (Delta Conservancy) provided an update on Proposition 4. L. Damon said voters approved Proposition 4 in November. She said she expects the soonest any solicitations will be out is July 2025, though it could take longer.

Advisory Committee Member Comments

- J. Herrick asked if there were any comments from the Advisory Committee.
- B. Pombo asked consultants to share a map of where habitat restoration would occur once they determine where it will take place at the next Advisory Committee meeting **(ACTION)**. R. Reinhardt said a map will be included in the preliminary alternatives he will present on at the next meeting.
- S. Puckett asked if G. Prasad and C. Elias would keep the Paradise Cut Management Team and the Advisory Committee apprised of future RFMP meetings so people can participate **(ACTION)**.

Public Comments

- J. Herrick asked if there were any public comments in person.
- J. Herrick asked if there were any public comments online.

2025 Meetings

- P. Marchand shared the 2025 Advisory Committee meeting schedule: April 21, 2025; August 25, 2025; September 22, 2025; December 15, 2025.

Adjournment

- J. Herrick adjourned the meeting at 12:59 PM.