

**FINAL**

**Approved by Advisory Committee on October 15, 2025**

**Meeting Summary**

**Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion Multi-benefit Project**

**Special Advisory Committee Meeting**

**August 26, 2024 | 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM**

**Committee Members (Present):**

John Herrick, South Delta Water Agency  
Sarah Puckett, American Rivers  
Robin Kloepper, City of Tracy (alternate)  
Andrea Buckley, CVFPB (non-voting)  
Jesus Esparza, DWR (non-voting)  
Susan Dell'Osso, Reclamation District 2062  
Alexis Stevens, Reclamation Districts 2058, 1007  
Nick Mussi, Reclamation District 1, 2, 544, 2089  
Bob Pombo, Reclamation District 2095  
Chris Elias, SJAFCA\*

\*Glenn Prasad was SJAFCA alternate until Chris Elias joined at 11:50 AM

**Committee Members (Absent):**

Ilene Macintire, City of Tracy (alternate present)

**Other In-Person Attendees:**

Eric Nagy, LWA  
Dominick Gulli, RD 1007  
Phil Balmat, San Joaquin County Resource Conservation District  
Chis Neudeck, KSN  
Greg Gibson, City of Lathrop

Daniel de Graaf, de Graaf Engineering  
Glenn Prasad, SJAFCA  
Leanne Randall, SJAFCA  
Ric Reinhardt, Wood Rodgers  
Petrea Marchand, Consero Solutions  
Laura Duffy, Consero Solutions  
Natalie McDonald, Consero Solutions

**Zoom Attendees:**

Anji Shakya, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy  
Artie Valencia, Restore the Delta  
Kelly Wright-LaForce, Banta-Carbona Irrigation District  
Lauren Damon, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy  
Natalie Bogan, HDR  
Sarah Lesmeister, Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy  
Scott Peterson, San Luis and Delta-Mendota Water Authority  
Melissa Weymiller, LWA

**Administrative Matters**

- J. Herrick called the meeting to order at 11:36 AM and initiated roll call (see above). L. Randall led roll call and established a quorum. John Herrick, Sarah Puckett, Robin Kloepper (alternate for Ilene Macintire), Andrea Buckley (attended on Zoom), Jesus Esparza, Susan Dell'Osso, Alexis Stevens, Nick Mussi, Bob Pombo, and Glenn Prasad (alternate for Chris Elias) were present. C. Elias joined the meeting at 11:50 AM.
- J. Herrick said there was a suggestion for a motion to change the order of the Advisory Committee meeting agenda items. P. Marchand suggested the Advisory Committee discuss the Engagement Strategy before the Decision Framework. Motion: S. Dell'Osso, second S. Puckett. Motion: passed 8-0; 0 absent (**DECISION**).
- J. Herrick brought forward a motion to approve the July 1, 2024 meeting summary. S. Puckett requested the facilitators (Consero Solutions) make two changes to the meeting summary: 1) correct the spelling of Artie Valencia's name on page 3 and 2) correct the location of the Flood Management Association conference from Los Angeles, CA to Las Vegas, NV on page 5 (**ACTION**).

- A. Stevens said she was not present at the last Advisory Committee meeting and requested the facilitator update the attendee list in the July 1, 2024 meeting summary **(ACTION)**.
- S. Puckett brought forward a motion to approve July 1, 2024 Advisory Committee meeting summary with corrections. Motion: S. Puckett, second S. Dell’Osso. Motion passed 8-0; 0 absent **(DECISION)**.

#### **Approve Addition of Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy as Advisory Committee Non-Voting Member**

- P. Marchand said SJAFCA staff recommends the Advisory Committee approve the addition of a non-voting member, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy, to the Advisory Committee. J. Herrick said because the committee is advisory, and the process is open to the public, he has no issue with adding a non-voting member. He asked for other from Advisory Committee members comments.
- S. Dell’Osso asked who the individual representing the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy would be. P. Marchand said they have not decided yet but staff can get back to the Advisory Committee with that information **(ACTION)**. J. Herrick asked the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy if they have identified who would be representing the agency on the Advisory Committee.
- S. Lesmeister said the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy will have to determine how much time it would take before they can decide who will attend and participate in Advisory Committee meetings going forward. She said it will be herself, Lauren Damon, or Anji Shakya. She said each of them are familiar with the project.
- J. Herrick asked for comments from the Advisory Committee. He asked for public comments.
- S. Puckett said she would like to thank the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy for their support and for providing past funding for Paradise Cut. S. Puckett brought forward a motion to approve SJAFCA staff’s recommendation to add the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy as a non-voting member of the Advisory Committee. Motion: S. Puckett, second N. Mussi. Motion passed 8-0; 0 absent **(DECISION)**.

#### **Recommend Official Project Name to SJAFCA**

- P. Marchand said the Phase 2 Planning Team used the name “Paradise Cut Expansion and South Delta Restoration Project.” She said the SJAFCA-DWR agreement funding this feasibility study stage calls the project the “Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion and Multi-Benefit Project.” She said DWR has confirmed the agency would like to keep this new name. SJAFCA staff suggests the Advisory Committee recommend “Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion and Multi-Benefit Project” as the official name to the SJAFCA Board of Directors.
- J. Herrick said this is committee is advisory, and though there may be strong views of how the project should proceed, the role of the Advisory Committee is to evaluate various items and make recommendations to SJAFCA. He asked for comments from the Advisory Committee. A. Stevens asked where the new name came from in the agreement with DWR and why it was different from the name used during Phase 2. P. Marchand asked J. Esparza if he wanted to address the question.
- J. Esparza said as far as DWR management, this is the name that came across his desk. G. Prasad said in terms of SJAFCA’s relationship and responsibilities with DWR and ongoing resources, “multi-benefit” is key word and has its place in a number of programs. He said sometimes the wording follows the funding stream. He said the Division of Multi-Benefit

Initiatives is a newly organized division within DWR with the responsibility to oversee projects like Paradise Cut with unique, multi-benefit opportunities. He said this is part of the reasoning behind the name. J. Esparza confirmed the term “multi-benefit” is tied to the Division of Multi-Benefit Initiatives where the funding is coming from. He said the change provides an opportunity for the Division to look for more funding for the project.

- J. Herrick asked for public comments.
- D. Gulli suggested calling the project the “Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion and South Delta Dredging Project” so people are clear on what is going on in the South Delta. He said he felt like the public would be more for it if they understood it was a dredging project. He said there are many DWR projects referred to as “multi-benefit” projects. He said he thought having another name for the project or sticking to the original name wouldn’t jeopardize the contract.
- J. Herrick said D. Gulli’s comments are appropriate. He said the development of this project necessitated buy-in by a large number of people and interests downstream of the bypass part; the dredging part was also debated for many years. He said it is important everyone understands the project is the bypass *and* substantial dredging of the South Delta or there will not be local support. He said he does not have a problem with the name change, just that he wished there was a discussion before it was made. He asked for any other comments.
- S. Puckett said she understood the project was renamed because it is under the Division of Multi-Benefit Initiatives, but she now understands the project is now under the Division of Integrated Water Resources. She asked J. Esparza if that was a different division. J. Esparza said no, the Division of Multi-Benefit Initiatives falls within the Division of Integrated Water Resources.
- J. Herrick said the potential motion is that the Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion and Multi-Benefit Project name be recommended by the Advisory Committee to the SJAFCA Board of Directors as the official project name going forward.
- S. Dell’Osso said she echoed the comments made about dredging.
- Motion: S. Dell’Osso, second: N. Mussi. Motion passed 7-1; opposed: A. Stevens  
**(DECISION).**

#### **Review Draft Engagement Strategy**

- P. Marchand introduced the draft Engagement Strategy. She said the document is only up for the Advisory Committee’s review today; there is no action required. She said the Paradise Cut Management Team had already seen the document and the consultant team integrated suggested changes. She said the team will go back to the Paradise Cut Management Team again on October 3 and then to the Advisory Committee again on October 15. At that point, the action for the Advisory Committee would be to recommend approval of the Engagement Strategy to the SJAFCA Board. She said she wanted to emphasize this strategy was based on the Engagement Strategy from Phase 2. She said the team will hold small group meetings and public workshops, post newsletters, develop a frequently asked questions document, and update the website. She said the purpose of the strategy is to engage interested parties in the completion of the feasibility study, including the preferred alternative. She described primary and secondary audiences for outreach. She said primary audiences are those the team will be actively soliciting feedback from and providing regular project updates to. She said the project team will provide regular

updates to secondary audiences via virtual communications and public workshops. P. Marchand asked if there were any questions from the Advisory Committee.

- J. Herrick asked when small meetings would begin. P. Marchand said the team expects to start small group meetings with reclamation districts in September and October. She said at these meetings, the project team would reintroduce everyone to where the team left off with Phase 2; discuss Phase 3 goals, objectives, and study area; and seek input on the draft Engagement Strategy.
- J. Herrick said he wanted to make sure Banta-Carbona Irrigation District is included in the primary audience list. P. Marchand confirmed it is. J. Herrick said the new weir is close to Banta-Carbona Irrigation District's intake and they have concerns.
- S. Dell'Osso said there may be some property owners that would be considered primary audiences, not secondary.
- J. Herrick asked for other input from Advisory Committee members.
- S. Puckett said she did not see any outreach to the secondary audiences in the Engagement Strategy goals. P. Marchand said she will add secondary audiences as appropriate to the Engagement Strategy goals **(ACTION)**.
- J. Herrick asked how many small group meetings he would have to attend. P. Marchand said that may be a negotiation between the project team and the Advisory Committee chair. J. Herrick said the Sites Reservoir hearings just started, so he has less time.
- B. Pombo asked if all landowners were on an outreach list. B. Pombo said there are some landowners who are affected who didn't know about the project.
- P. Marchand said the team wants to make sure everyone who needs to be on the list is on it. She said the team is working with SJAFCA and the Advisory Committee chair to compile a distribution list. P. Marchand will send J. Herrick a draft list for review **(ACTION)**.
- J. Herrick asked for public comments. No comments in person or online.
- G. Prasad said regarding J. Herrick's early question about the number of Advisory Committee meetings, once SJAFCA approves the Engagement Strategy and Decision Framework, the project team will look at the project schedule. He said meetings may be dependent on milestones, additional outreach, or field tours. He said once the project team has all the information, they can present a more robust schedule. J. Herrick clarified his question was on how many small group meetings he as chair would have to attend but thanked G. Prasad for providing the information.
- J. Herrick asked if there were other comments. No comments in person or online.

#### **Recommend Approval of Draft Decision Framework to SJAFCA**

- P. Marchand said M. Weymiller will lead the discussion on the Decision Framework. P. Marchand said the Decision Framework is complementary to the Engagement Strategy.
- M. Weymiller said the purpose of the Decision Framework is to outline the responsibilities, composition, and governance processes of the entities responsible for advice and decisions related to the project. She reviewed the graphics from the draft Engagement Strategy outlining the roles and responsibilities of the different teams involved: SJAFCA, DWR, Advisory Committee, Paradise Cut Management Team, Technical Review Panel, and the consultant team. M. Weymiller said the team is working to get the Technical Review Panel on contract as the independent review body.

- She reviewed the graphic showing the proposed decision-making process for deliverables and where they would get approved. She said day-to-day decisions would be made by the consultant team and the Paradise Cut Management Team. She said certain larger deliverables would go to the Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee could make recommendations to the SJAFCA Board of Directors, who would then get DWR leadership approval.
- She said the team knows there have been comments from DWR on the draft that have not been addressed yet. She said the team is looking for the Advisory Committee to review and potentially approve to recommend to the SJAFCA Board of Directors. She said the team could make amendments if necessary. She asked for questions or comments from the Advisory Committee.
- J. Herrick said there have been several communications and discussions about the Decision Framework. He said DWR's comments, which had not yet been incorporated, led DWR to ask the team to not recommend the document yet. He said there is a proposal to move it forward allowing DWR's comments to be incorporated later and approved. He said the Advisory Committee knows they are not the decisionmakers but the group is the method by which local interests were brought aboard to have input along the way on the project. He said it is up to SJAFCA and DWR for how to proceed. He said their procedural decisions are beyond the scope of the Advisory Committee. He said the Advisory Committee is there to advise. He said from South Delta Water Agency's perspective, it took a lot of effort to take a very beneficial project and make it acceptable to the greater area. He said a lot of people were involved in that process. He said the position of many people was "we support the project if..." and the "if" was the downstream dredging part. He said everyone needs to understand the downstream interests will not be supportive if the dredging part gets removed or significantly decreased. He said he just wants everyone to understand this was a delicate joining of interests. He said the project provides tremendous benefits under high flow events on the San Joaquin to a lot of people and property. He said the downstream people's opinion upfront was "I don't want one more inch of water." He said they had to balance these interests to get where they are today. He said with that in mind, he felt the Decision Framework was acceptable to him. He said he understood the decisionmakers were SJAFCA and DWR. He asked for other comments from the Advisory Committee.
- B. Pombo said as 2095 and as an irrigation district inside 2095, his priority is that their infrastructure is protected and that there is no undue process to maintain because of the project. He said he is all for working together but he doesn't want to sell out anyone's benefits. J. Herrick said he appreciated that and those are the specifics to work through now.
- C. Elias thanked J. Herrick for his comments and wanted to let him know SJAFCA heard his concerns. He said it took a long time to get to this point and SJAFCA's goal is to sustain the balance. He said this will be guided by the input the team receives.
- J. Herrick said he did not want his comments to come off as criticism or mistrust. He said the feasibility study covers a lot and the team will discuss any changes as they come up.
- J. Esparza said downstream effects are always top of mind for DWR and they would definitely be considered. He said anything that would be needed to mitigate those type of effects would also be taken into account as far as DWR is concerned. He shared an

anecdote. He said he understands the value of local leaders making decisions. He said there are a lot of things the group needs to consider and work together on. He said there are a lot of things to fall into place for everyone and hopefully it is what works best for everyone.

- J. Herrick said he wants to make sure it is clear the downstream interest is dredging, not just mitigation. J. Herrick said he read J. Esparza's changes this morning. He asked G. Prasad for the team's recommendation on how to move forward.
- G. Prasad said the Paradise Cut Management Team discussed this item. He said given the project needs to stay on track, staff would recommend the Advisory Committee proceed by authorizing the Chair to finalize the Decision Framework in collaboration with the Paradise Cut Management Team and recommend the Decision Framework to the SJAFCA Board for approval.
- S. Puckett asked when the next Paradise Cut Management Team meeting was and M. Weymiller said October 3. S. Puckett asked if the Paradise Cut Management team would meet to finalize the Decision Framework before the next Paradise Cut Management Team meeting. G. Prasad said yes, though this could also be done over email. J. Herrick said it would probably be better to have a meeting.
- J. Herrick said the proposal from SJAFCA is to make a motion to accept the draft Decision Framework and authorize the Chair to finalize the document in collaboration with the Paradise Cut Management Team and recommend the document to SJAFCA. He asked if anyone else had more comments.
- A. Stevens wanted to confirm the reason the Advisory Committee was not yet approving is because DWR made comments that have not yet been incorporated. She asked what kind of comments. G. Prasad said DWR's primary concern is that the decision-making framework was described in a way that made it seem as though the Advisory Committee was making decisions on the project. He said this Advisory Committee was formed not to make decisions but to make recommendations to the SJAFCA Board that has an agreement with the State. He said those changes require adding clarifying language.
- P. Marchand said the first round of edits from DWR are reflected in the document before the Advisory Committee in revision mode and the second round of edits were received today.
- J. Herrick asked for public comments.
- S. Puckett brought forward a motion to accept the draft Decision Framework and authorize the Chair of the Advisory Committee to finalize the document in collaboration with the Paradise Cut Management Team either with or without a meeting and recommend the final document to SJAFCA. Motion: S. Puckett, second: S. Dell'Oso. Motion passed 8-0; 0 absent **(DECISION)**.

#### **Recommend Project Goals, Objectives, and Study Area to SJAFCA**

- *Note: After August 26, Consero Solutions realized the Advisory Committee agenda packet contained an outdated copy of the project goals, objectives and study area. The presentation provided by R. Reinhardt (Wood Rodgers) contained the most recent and accurate version of the project goals, objectives, and study area. The Consultant Team is amending this error at the next Advisory Committee meeting on October 15, 2024.*

- R. Reinhardt (Wood Rodgers) presented on recommended project goals, objectives, and study area. He said the goals and objectives were written to make sure the entire area impacted also benefits from the project. He reviewed goals from Phase 2: flood risk reduction, habitat restoration, and channel restoration. He said the current project objectives listed in the DWR contract with SJAFCA are to reduce catastrophic flood risk for communities including Lathrop, Manteca, and Stockton; protect farms from uncontrolled flooding; restore riverine, floodplain, riparian, and wetland habitat for native fish and wildlife; improve irrigation intake reliability and waterway navigability; and improve water supply reliability and resilience to climate change by supporting more flexible water supply management. He said the team took this information to the PCMT and PCMT members suggested adding climate change resiliency goals and Central Valley Flood Protection Plan flood and habitat goals. He said one goal we suggested not be considered is adding water quality. He said as the technical team looks at what the project will accomplish from a water quality standpoint and the existing conditions, the team does not believe there will be a measurable impact on water quality. He said the report will certainly walk through what the impacts are and the potential benefits, but it gives the team pause to recommend it in the goals and objectives. He said the team will provide a budget for the scope it would take to do additional modelling. With that background, he said the recommended goals are flood risk reduction, ecosystem restoration, and water supply. He said the recommended objectives are to reduce catastrophic flood risk for communities including Lathrop, Manteca, and Stockton; protect farms from uncontrolled flooding; restore and improve the quantity, diversity, and connectivity of riverine, floodplain, riparian, and wetland habitat for native fish and wildlife; and improve irrigation intake reliability and waterway navigability.
- R. Reinhardt paused for questions or comments from the Advisory Committee. No questions or comments.
- R. Reinhardt said the first thing their team looked at for the study area was the Anchor QEA report that looked at 25 miles of dredging. He said they also took the maximum footprint for the Phase 2 area. He said one thing that was missing was the definition between the study area and the benefit area. He said the study area is just where they are looking at actions, so the benefit area can be larger than the study area. He showed a slide of the proposed study area map and said the benefit area would be larger.
- J. Herrick said the channel restoration part includes Tom Paine Slough in the list but the channel is not highlighted on the maps. R. Reinhardt said he will make that change **(ACTION)**.
- C. Elias asked for clarification on why water quality will not be recommended as a goal or objective. R. Reinhardt said the feasibility study team will study water quality in detail. He said it is their technical expert's opinion that the project will not be able to make a significant enough positive benefit to establish it as a goal for the project, but it will be evaluated. He said they are not seeing opportunities for water quality uplift. He also said the team does not think water quality will be a basis on which to justify the project or secure funding. He said it is an important piece to look at but the team is cautious about managing expectations.

- C. Elias had a question about the link between sedimentation and not being able to see significant water quality benefits. R. Reinhardt said the team can look at increased scope for more modeling but wanted to manage expectations.
- J. Herrick said he appreciates the input that R. Reinhardt's team has and he now agrees with his recommendation to not include water quality as a goal. He said he will discuss this further with the consultants **(ACTION)**.
- S. Dell'Osso asked why a section from Old River from San Joaquin to Middle River was not included in the study area. R. Reinhardt said the team was not proposing any actions for that segment of the river. He said if the Advisory Committee is aware of projects in that footprint they could expand it. He said it was not proposed for the dredging or ecosystem projects. He said this was also not included in Phase 2. S. Dell'Osso said if they can add it, it would be an important section. R. Reinhardt says the team is here to get feedback today. R. Reinhardt will look at adding Old River from San Joaquin to Middle River as well as Tom Paine Slough to the study area and report back to the Paradise Cut Management Team at the next meeting **(ACTION)**.
- S. Puckett had concerns about making the study area too rigid and suggested there be a process to make it flexible if something came up down the road. R. Reinhardt said the study area will help the team focus on an area, but there would always be the opportunity to add areas to look at if there is a rationale.
- J. Herrick asked for other comments from the Advisory Committee or staff. He asked if there were any public comments.
- C. Neudek said one of the considerations for the beneficial reuse of dredge spoils is the left bank of Fabian Bell canal (Fabian Tract). He said they are interested in that material and the idea of laying their levees back, creating that riparian forest and shaded river component. He said none of that is shown on the map. R. Reinhardt repeated C. Neudek's comment so people on Zoom could hear. He said RD 773 is interested in being evaluated for dredge spoils. He said there would be a lot of materials to get rid of and would be interested in hearing which reclamation districts would have an interest in receiving that material. J. Herrick reiterated it is important to coordinate the project with reclamation district's short- and long-term proposals. D. Gulli said he had eight reclamation districts interested as well.
- R. Reinhardt said the important piece is it is ideal to have the reclamation districts receiving the spoils as close as possible, as it gets expensive to transport.
- J. Herrick asked for comments. No comments in person or online.
- C. Elias motioned to recommend the project goals, objectives, and study area to SJAFCA for approval. Motion: C. Elias; second: S. Puckett. Motion passed 8-0; 0 absent **(DECISION)**.
- Comment from Zoom: "I understand about listing the goals, but let's please evaluate water quality benefits in some sort of analysis. Contingent on funding...I understand...Let's try." – Artie Valencia (asked to be captured in notes to inform planning team).

#### **DWR and CVFPB Updates**

- No comments at this time.

#### **Advisory Committee Comments**

- C. Elias said he wanted to mention a recent tour. A. Buckley said there was a tour two weeks ago for Department of Finance and Legislative Analyst's Office staff to familiarize them with the needs of the SJAFCA area. She said there were great presentations and a great tour. She said hopefully the tour will be successful for advocating for funding. C. Elias thanked J. Herrick for being at the tour to provide his knowledge and experience.
- J. Herrick said he had talked to local Congressmen and he has been invited to speak at a subcommittee hearing. He said there are other efforts going on to find funding for the project. He said there is another tour coming up and there can be more tours to bring people up to speed or show people what is going on. He suggested going to the Banta-Carbona intake at some point.
- B. Pombo said per R. Reinhardt's comments at last meeting, some of the property that is going to be flooded have conservation easements. He said he had a question from a landowner on whether they would be condemning the property and taking it or condemning the conservation easement. J. Herrick said in the earlier processes they had long discussions related to this. He said the solution was to condemn the old easements. He said the landowner has been cooperative up to this date.
- K. Wright-LaForce said Banta-Carbona Irrigation District would like to meet with the outreach team when they come out. J. Herrick said he will meet with Banta-Carbona Irrigation District and continue to keep them informed **(ACTION)**.

#### **Public Comment**

- No public comments. General comments in the Zoom chat included: video was a bit fuzzy and it was hard to hear audience members if they were not speaking into the mic at the podium. Some Zoom attendees expressed interest in having the slides posted online, as the Zoom video quality made them hard to see.

#### **Adjournment**

- J. Herrick adjourned the meeting at 12:58 PM.