

PARADISE CUT BYPASS EXPANSION AND MULTI-BENEFIT PROJECT



WINTER 2025 NEWSLETTER

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PARADISE CUT FEASIBILITY STUDY UNDERWAY

The Paradise Cut Bypass Expansion and Multi-Benefit Project (Project) will improve flood protection for local communities, restore habitat, and improve water supply reliability in the South Delta. The Project will expand the existing Paradise Cut Bypass, restore capacity in South Delta channels, and improve habitat for species of state and local importance. By significantly lowering flood stage along nearly 30 miles of the San Joaquin River between Vernalis and Stockton, the Project will greatly increase public safety, as well as protect property and farmland from uncontrolled flooding.

A diverse group of interested parties is working together to advance this pragmatic, multi-benefit, regional solution – a shared vision for cities, farms, and wildlife. The San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (SJAFCA) is leading an effort with the California Department of Water Resources to advance a feasibility study in 2025. SJAFCA is partnering with an Advisory Committee, reclamation districts, and local and state agencies. Find out more about how SJAFCA will consult with local interests by reviewing the Project Decision Recommendation Framework.



“The Project has been in the works for more than 20 years and will help protect the South Delta community from flood impacts, as well as help manage siltation challenges in South Delta channels. The channel capacity constraints worsen every year, reducing surface water irrigation options and negatively affecting South Delta farms important to the nation’s food supply.”

John Herrick

General Counsel, South Delta Water Agency
Chair, Paradise Cut Advisory Committee

“This crucial multi-benefit project will divert floodwaters away from the cities of Stockton, Lathrop, and Manteca while restoring critical floodplain habitat along the San Joaquin River and Paradise Cut for Swainson’s hawk, riparian songbirds, and the riparian brush rabbit. We urgently need to invest in and implement this large-scale project along the San Joaquin River similar to the Yolo Bypass on the Sacramento River, which protects the City of Sacramento.”

Sarah Puckett

Central Valley Program Director, American Rivers
Voting Member, Paradise Cut Advisory Committee

PROJECT GOALS

- Increase flood system resiliency in the South Delta.
- Restore habitat and ecosystem functions necessary for climate change resilience.
- Improve water supply reliability and resilience to climate change by supporting more flexible water supply management.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- 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.
- Improve irrigation intake reliability and waterway navigability.



Existing Paradise Cut rock weir (July 2024)

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

Visit the [Project website](#) and attend public Advisory Committee meetings. The Advisory Committee provides input to SJAFCA and discusses its recommendations publicly at these meetings. More meeting information, including meeting materials, is available [here](#). Advisory Committee members include:

- American Rivers (Sarah Puckett)
- Central Valley Flood Protection Board (non-voting) (Andrea Buckley)
- City of Tracy (non-voting) (Ilene Macintire)
- California Department of Water Resources (non-voting) (Jesus Esparza)
- RD 1 / 2 / 544 / 2089 (Nick Mussi)
- RD 1007 / 2058 (Alexis Stevens)
- RD 2095 (Bob Pombo)
- RD 2062 (Susan Dell'Osso)
- South Delta Water Agency (John Herrick)
- San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (Darren Suen)
- Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy (nonvoting) (Lauren Damon)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

(subject to change)



**APR
21**

April 21, 2025

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM, Location TBD

**AUG
25**

August 25, 2025

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM, Location TBD

**SEPT
22**

September 22, 2025

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM, Location TBD

**DEC
15**

December 15, 2025

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM, Location TBD

PROJECT MILESTONES



SJAFCA CHAMPIONS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The feasibility study stage started in mid-2024. SJAFCA developed the Project Engagement Strategy early in the process to guide its efforts to engage local and state interests. The feasibility study team will release project documents incrementally, culminating in the release of the Draft Feasibility Report in November 2025. The team will complete the Final Feasibility Report by early 2026.



Small group meeting with reclamation district staff (October 2024)

CONTACT US

Questions, comments, or concerns?

Interested in joining the Paradise Cut email distribution list?

Please email info@sjafca.com.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT

SJAFCA may adjust the schedule as the study progresses. Sign up for SJAFCA's email distribution list for project updates.

Formulation of Preliminary Alternatives

- Advisory Committee Review Period: April 2, 2025 – April 15, 2025
- Discussion at Advisory Committee Meeting: April 21, 2025

Spring 2025

Evaluation and Comparison of Final Array of Alternatives

- Advisory Committee Review Period: August 6, 2025 – August 20, 2025
- Discussion at Advisory Committee Meeting: August 25, 2025

Summer 2025

Draft Feasibility Report

- Preview at Advisory Committee Meeting: September 22, 2025
- Public Workshop #1: September/October 2025 (date TBD)
- Advisory Committee Review Period: November 19, 2025 – December 10, 2025
- Discussion at Advisory Committee Meeting: December 15, 2025
- Public Workshop #2: December 2025 (date TBD)

Fall 2025 -
Winter 2025

Final Feasibility Report

- Available January 2026

January 2026

MEET DARREN SUEN, SJAFCA'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Darren Suen

On December 12, 2024, the SJAFCA Board voted unanimously to hire Darren Suen as SJAFCA's Executive Director. Suen officially succeeded outgoing Executive Director Chris Elias on January 2, 2024, who is credited with helping to lead SJAFCA's efforts to further the Project and secure over \$3 million from the California Department of Water Resources to complete the feasibility study.

Suen, a licensed civil engineer, has worked for several SJAFCA partner agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Water Resources, and the

California Central Valley Flood Protection Board. Most recently, he served as a chief of staff in the California State Assembly. He is a resident of Elk Grove and an Elk Grove City Councilmember.