

Major Themes from Small Group Conversations

1. Ecology
 - a. Public access-wildlife conflicts
 - i. Public access could be located in areas more appropriate for the region, and project-by-project public access requirements do not address this need.
 - ii. Clarification is needed to understand if/what conflicts exist between BCDC's public access requirements and the missions and policies of the other natural resource management agencies operating within the Suisun Marsh.
 - iii. Clarification is needed to understand if/how public access impacts wildlife preservation and marsh restoration goals.
 - b. Sea level rise and climate change
 - i. Prioritizing long-term resiliency of tidal marsh and tidal marsh restoration projects can be achieved by recognizing where best areas to allow upland migration are located.
 - ii. Levees and levee maintenance are central to current management regimes within the Suisun Marsh.
 - iii. Sea level rise combined with levee failures could have far reaching impacts on water quality and ecological processes in the region.
 - c. Permitting and policy interpretations
 - i. Permitting and policy need to be dynamic in the face of the rapidly changing best available science around wetland restoration and management.
 - ii. Permit conditions could be written in a way that allows for change through time, so permittees can reasonably respond to changing conditions.
 - iii. Clarification is needed on how the boundaries of the Primary and Secondary Management Areas could/would change as sea level rises. Such static boundaries may not reflect the ecological reality, which has implications for habitat management.
 - d. Tidal marshes and managed wetlands and restoration
 - i. The Protection Plan could recognize the ecological value of many different habitat types (e.g. tidal marsh, managed wetland, upland transition zone) more explicitly in its findings and policies.
 - ii. Understanding the value of these different ecosystems and habitat types is key and could be considered in a regional context to better address planning and restoration goals.
 - iii. Tidal restoration sites need to be carefully selected with an eye to potential connections between restoration sites, but this is deeply tied to the willingness of any individual property owner to sell.
 - iv. Proper management of all wetland types is expensive and funding for long-term stewardship limits the types of projects and efforts that can be sustained.
2. Public Access and Recreation
 - a. Public access-wildlife conflicts

- i. Public access could be more strategically placed (not project-by-project), and the pooling of resources could allow public access to be established in a way that makes sense in a regional context.
 - ii. Introducing public access into the interior areas of the marsh can have detrimental impacts on wildlife and native plant populations.
 - iii. Clarification is needed to understand any conflicts among the laws/policies/missions of other agencies and BCDC's public access requirements.
 - iv. Clarification is needed to understand how the McAteer-Petris Act and Bay Plan interact with the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act and the Suisun Marsh Protection Plan.
 - v. Public access requirements should be more clearly communicated so project planners can include them in their work.
 - vi. Clarification is needed about in lieu public access and how that portion of BCDC's policies are applied.
 - b. Wildlife-oriented recreation
 - i. There is a long legacy of hunting and fishing in the marsh, which has been and will be important to its preservation.
 - ii. Due to safety concerns, there is a tension between hunting and other forms of recreation and public access in the marsh.
 - iii. A large part of the wildlife-oriented recreation happens on private land and connecting public access opportunities across a mosaic of private and public land is challenging for public land managers and private landowners.
 - c. Existing public access
 - i. Maintenance of public access is a big concern and a funding burden. Focusing on enhancing existing public access is an important step. This is also important for public safety.
 - ii. Communication about existing public access could be improved, and this would aid in preventing trampling of habitat in areas the public are not supposed to access but do.
 - iii. The Pacific Flyway Center could act as a jumping off point for tourists and help clarify the public access opportunities within the marsh.
 - iv. Rush Ranch has excellent public access opportunities, and there is a need to understand how sensitive the habitat is at Rush Ranch to increasing demand via public access.
 - d. Public access maintenance
 - i. Public access mandates without resources for maintenance are a burden to groups focused on habitat preservation and restoration.
 - ii. Parking lots, waste removal, littering, and security are major concerns of increased public access within the marsh.
3. Built Environment
 - a. Levee maintenance

- i. We need to better understand how sea level rise could impact levee stability and efficacy. Additionally, we need to understand how to balance the cost of maintaining the current hydrologic geometry of Suisun Marsh in the face of sea level rise.
 - ii. Funding to maintain levees is limited, but levee maintenance is extremely important.
 - iii. The regulatory burden to get permits to maintain levees is difficult to respond to and understand, especially when it feels like the interpretation of policies change.
 - iv. Levee failure could have huge impacts on water quality for the region.
- b. Salinity control gates
 - i. The salinity control gates are a major feature of the built environment and should be given special consideration when updating descriptions of the current and future built environment in the Protection Plan.
 - ii. We need to understand how these gates could help managers respond to sea level rise and other climate change impacts.
 - iii. We need to understand the ecological impacts of the salinity control gates.
- c. Maintenance of other aspects of the built environment
 - i. Pumping infrastructure on managed wetlands will likely change in response to climate change and sea level rise. There needs to be clarity around what a landowner is dealing with if they want to upgrade facilities or change management practices.
 - ii. Maintenance of public access and recreation infrastructure is important for public safety, but funding is very limited.
 - iii. As development increases around the marsh, we will need funds to maintain facilities in the face of greater use (garbage, security, etc.).
 - iv. Consideration should be given to how utility companies can be engaged to achieve a focus on facility maintenance in the marsh, which can avoid potential negative impacts (e.g. fire risk from energy transmission lines).
- d. New technologies
 - i. We need to assess how our policies do or do not address new technologies.
 - 1. Examples: Drones, Wind turbines, 5G infrastructure
- e. Specific aspects of the built environment stakeholders mentioned
 - i. Railroad
 - ii. Grizzly Island Road
 - iii. Duck Club Infrastructure
 - iv. Wastewater infrastructure
 - v. Hill Slough restoration project
 - vi. Pacific Flyway Center
 - vii. Roaring River joint use facility
 - viii. Salinity control gates