

News Release



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Plan Proposes Expanded Recreation in Delta, Bringing Boost to Local Economy

Population to Double, Recreation Demand to Follow...Time for a Plan!

California State Parks has prepared a recreation proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the Suisun Marsh which outlines opportunities for expanded recreation and a better economy in the Delta. The report states that with investments from the public and the private sectors, recreation and tourism can draw more visitors to the region and boost local business and jobs.

The report, *Recreation Proposal for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh*, makes recommendations which are designed to meet the growing demand for recreation, which in turn will draw added visitors and lead to a more sustainable economy throughout the Delta. It points out that travel and recreation spending in Delta counties in 2006 was \$4.8 billion, but that it could be much more in the future.

The five Delta counties' population (Sacramento, San Joaquin, Contra Costa, Solano and Yolo Counties) is projected to almost double, approaching 7 million by 2050. Almost 10 million people will live in the San Francisco Bay Area, while the Central Valley population will swell to 13 million. As populations grow, so too will the demand for recreation; therefore, as the report concludes, the time to plan for the Delta's future is today.

"We may not have the money in a tight economy to invest today," said Ruth Coleman, director of California State Parks, "but we must prepare for the future. This plan sets the stage for future investments that will expand recreation, draw added visitors and improve the area's economic vitality."

The report points out that the Delta and Suisun Marsh waterways are already inviting to boaters, with about 7.4 million visitor boating days every year. However, marinas and boater equipment rentals will be in even greater demand in coming years, as will other types of recreation that could be expanded and improved, such as: camping and picnicking, participating in historic site and nature tours, exploring water trails, wildlife viewing and bird watching, fishing and waterfowl hunting, attending local festivals, visiting farmer's markets with local Delta farmers, and more. With increases in those types of recreational opportunities, the

For energy efficient recreation –

California State Parks on the Internet: www.parks.ca.gov>



private sector will expand with Delta visitors needing more hotels, motels, restaurants, camping and boating supplies, and recreational equipment rental businesses to serve their increased demand.

The key to the report is how all of this gets started and gets done. The report says no one agency or private entity can do it alone. This is a long-term vision to be implemented over many years. It calls for partnerships and collaborations between local, State and Federal agencies, private businesses, Delta farmers, non-profit organizations and other stakeholders. For instance, a sampling of the recommendations is listed below:

- California State Parks can expand and improve existing facilities and add three new parks at Barker Slough, Elkhorn Basin and the South Delta. It would partner with other State and federal agencies, counties, conservancies, nonprofits and others to add and improve recreation facilities.
- California Department of Fish and Game could collaborate with other agencies and non-profits, private land owners and business partners to expand wildlife viewing, angling and hunting opportunities.
- Caltrans can collaborate with agencies listed above and others for connections between recreation sites, to include bridges, pull-outs, bike lanes, sidewalks and trails
- The Department of Water Resources could open its public lands for bank fishing, levee-top trails, boat ramps, and environmental education.
- The Delta Protection Commission could oversee a National Heritage Area in the region, coordinate completion of the Great California Delta Trail and collaborate with other agencies, business and farmers to enhance agri-tourism.

The plan is available for public review through Tuesday, May 31. The report can be downloaded from www.parks.ca.gov/deltarecreation starting on Tuesday, May 3. The plan was prepared in response to the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009, with funds provided by the Delta Stewardship Council. It will be submitted to the Delta Stewardship Council and the Delta Protection Commission for review and possible inclusion in their respective strategic management plans for the five counties and 1,300 square miles within the region.

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